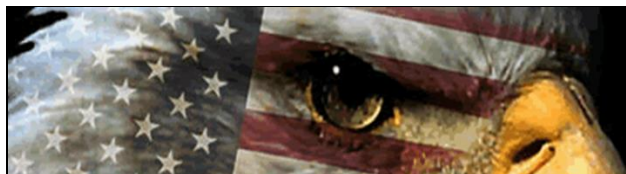



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## Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	08/02 High cost of living piling up credit card debt
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/02/economy/consumer-credit-borrowing-surge/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/02/economy/consumer-credit-borrowing-surge/index.html</a>

**New York (CNN)**Americans are piling up credit card debt as they struggle to keep up with the high cost of living.

US household debt surpassed \$16 trillion for the first time ever during the second quarter, the New York Federal Reserve said Tuesday.

Even as borrowing costs surge, the NY Fed said credit card balances increased by \$46 billion last quarter.

Over the past year, credit card debt has jumped by \$100 billion, or 13%, the biggest percentage increase in more than 20 years. Credit cards typically charge high interest rates when balances aren't fully paid off, making this an expensive form of debt.

The NY Fed said the credit card binge at least partly reflects inflation [as prices rise at the fastest pace in more than four decades](#).

"The impacts of inflation are apparent in high volumes of borrowing," NY Fed researchers wrote in a blog post.

High inflation is also making it more expensive to carry a credit card balance because the Federal Reserve is aggressively raising borrowing costs. The Fed [raised its benchmark interest rate by three-quarters of a percentage point](#) last week for the second month in a row.

Not only are credit card balances rising, but Americans opened 233 million new credit card accounts during the second quarter, the most since 2008, the NY Fed report found.

[High inflation](#) is also forcing consumers to dip into their savings. The personal savings rate fell in June to 5.1%, the lowest since August 2009, the Bureau of Labor Statistics said last week.

Despite rising debt levels, the NY Fed said consumer balance sheets appear to be in a "strong position" overall.

Most of the 2% quarter-over-quarter increase in US household debt to \$16.2 trillion was driven by a jump in mortgage borrowing. Student loan balances were little changed at \$1.6 trillion.

By and large, Americans continued to pay down debt on schedule last quarter, a reflection of [the very strong job market](#). The NY Fed said the share of current debt transitioning into delinquency remains "historically very low," though it did increase modestly.

"Although debt balances are growing rapidly, households in general have weathered the pandemic remarkably well," the NY Fed said in the report, noting the unprecedented assistance from the federal government during the onset of Covid-19.

There are hints, however, that some lower-income and subprime borrowers are now struggling to keep up with their bills.

The report found that the delinquency transition rate for credit cards and auto loans is "creeping up," [especially in lower-income areas](#).

"With the supportive policies of the pandemic mostly in the past, there are pockets of borrowers who are beginning to show some distress on their debt," the report said.

Helped by moratoriums and forbearance programs, foreclosures remain "very low," according to the report.

	However, credit reports indicate the number of new foreclosures increased by 11,000 during the second quarter, the NY Fed said, potentially signaling the "beginning of a return to more typical levels."
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 FBI lacks picture of threats election officials</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/02/politics/election-threats-workers/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/02/politics/election-threats-workers/index.html</a>
GIST	<p>(CNN)The FBI's process for receiving reports of <a href="#">violent threats or harassment against election officials</a> is not built to handle the volume of reports, leaving the Justice Department with an incomplete picture of the problem's scope as the midterms approach, the executive director of a national election officials' group is set to tell Congress Wednesday.</p> <p>"A common refrain I hear from my members is that nobody is going to take this seriously until something bad happens, and we are all braced for the worst," Amy Cohen, the executive director of the National Association of State Election Directors (NASED), will tell the Senate Judiciary Committee, according to a copy of her prepared testimony obtained by CNN.</p> <p>Some senior election officials have struggled to get security details from state police, Cohen will testify, in an environment that has only grown more tense amid false conspiracy theories about fraud in the 2020 presidential election. More broadly, election officials lack a clear definition of what constitutes a threat or harassment at the federal level, according to Cohen's written remarks.</p> <p>CNN has requested comment from the FBI and the Justice Department, which last year set up a task force for investigating threats of violence and intimidation to election workers.</p> <p>Assistant Attorney General Kenneth A. Polite, Jr. met virtually with about 750 election officials on Monday to give them an update on the task force, <a href="#">according</a> to a Justice Department press release. The task force has reviewed over "1,000 contacts reported as hostile or harassing by the election community," of which about 11% "met the threshold for a federal criminal investigation," the department said.</p> <p>More than half of the potentially criminal threats were in battleground states where the 2020 results were challenged, such as Arizona, Georgia, Colorado, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Nevada, and Wisconsin, according to the Justice Department.</p> <p>Election officials have more on their plate than ever in trying to tamp down disinformation about the voting process while keeping an eye on foreign hacking threats and threats of violence.</p> <p>A classified briefing that US intelligence and national security officials held for election officials in April covered threats of violence based on conspiracy theories, a change in the threat landscape since 2020, CNN <a href="#">previously reported</a>.</p> <p>A Massachusetts man was <a href="#">arrested Friday</a> after being indicted by a grand jury for allegedly making a bomb threat last year towards an election official in Arizona.</p> <p>As a result of the threats and harassment to election officials, "NASED has heard from state election offices in which every employee now has a concealed carry license and actively carries a weapon," Cohen's testimony says.</p> <p>"[W]e have heard from state election offices that have seen long-time employees abruptly give notice en masse with no jobs lined up, citing safety concerns; and we have heard from states that have lost 25 to 30 percent of their local election officials because those public servants no longer want to work in this environment," Cohen will testify.</p> <p>Federal officials have looked to strengthen physical and cybersecurity support for election administrators.</p>

	<p>The US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency has 127 physical security specialists across the country who can assess election facilities for safety, and the agency plans to hire 15 more by the end of the year.</p> <p>Yet funding and other resources are a long-term challenge for security of and administration of elections, according to experts.</p> <p>The Justice Department clarified in January that a criminal justice grants program that gives states millions of dollars each year can be used to protect against physical threats against election workers.</p> <p>A Justice Department spokesperson told CNN in June that the department division overseeing the grants had yet to report any use of funds to protect against threats of violence to election workers. CNN has requested an update to that data.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/03 Stuck in 'horrible plateau' of Covid deaths</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2022/08/03/covid-deaths-us-stuck-horrible-plateau-experts-say-heres-why/10202358002/">https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2022/08/03/covid-deaths-us-stuck-horrible-plateau-experts-say-heres-why/10202358002/</a>
GIST	<p>"COVID is over" might trend within social media circles, but weekly U.S. death tolls tell a different story.</p> <p>Despite a slight uptick in July, the pace of COVID-19 deaths has remained steady since May at about 400 a day, according to a USA TODAY analysis of Johns Hopkins University data.</p> <p>"We're sitting on this horrible plateau," said Dr. Daniel Griffin, an infectious disease specialist with Pro Health Care in New York and a clinical instructor of medicine at Columbia University. "It's been this way for the past couple of months, and we're getting used to it."</p> <p>In July, more than 12,500 Americans died of COVID-19, according to the USA TODAY analysis.</p> <p>Coronavirus deaths are similar to the number of influenza deaths normally reported during peak season, said David Dowdy, epidemiologist at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. A bad flu season in the USA could see more than 50,000 deaths.</p> <p>That doesn't mean COVID-19 mortality has reached that of flu, he said, as peak flu season lasts only about three months. Spread over the course of the year, Dowdy said, there would be about four times as many COVID-19 deaths than flu deaths.</p> <p>COVID-19 is "like having to live in flu season year round, and that's not what we do with the flu," he said. "If we had to do that with the flu, we'd be instituting more measures than what we do."</p> <p>Most Americans who died of COVID-19 were immunocompromised or older than 75, experts said. These patients ranged in vaccination status – from being unvaccinated to receiving all their recommended vaccines and boosters.</p> <p>What appears to make the biggest difference between patients who recover from COVID-19 or die, Griffin said, is whether they receive treatment within the first week of diagnosis.</p> <p>"I can't remember someone in my recent memory who did all the right things, who got the vaccine and got the proper early treatment, and ended up in the hospital and died," he said.</p> <p>The antiviral Paxlovid, from Pfizer, has been effective at keeping high-risk COVID-19 patients out of the hospital. But it's losing esteem among providers and patients as public figures report rebound infections after taking the antiviral, Griffin said.</p>

[President Joe Biden, 79, tested positive for the coronavirus Saturday](#), three days after he twice tested negative and was thought to have recovered. His chief medical adviser, [Dr. Anthony Fauci, 81, reported a rebound infection in June](#).

Although it appears more rebound infections are reported, Dr. Ashish Jha, the White House's COVID-19 response coordinator, said the rate of cases is probably about 5%. Most people aren't tested as often as health officials, [Jha said in a series of tweets Monday](#).

It's not clear whether a rebound after taking the antiviral is different from a rebound without the drug. In the trial that led to Paxlovid's authorization, 2% of those who took the medication and nearly the same percentage of those who didn't experienced rebounds.

The uncertainty surrounding antivirals and other COVID-19 treatments may contribute to preventable deaths, Griffin said.

"A lot of clinicians are reading the popular press, and that's where they're getting their impression of things," he said. "You have a five-day opportunity to reduce the disease progression, and once that window is closed, it's closed."

[A monoclonal antibody called Evusheld from AstraZeneca](#) prevented severe disease in people with weakened immune systems who may not get full protection from vaccines. It provides long-lasting protection, but Griffin said some providers don't recommend it to eligible patients.

"It's not an easy lift," he said. "You can't just write a prescription. It's still only being sent to certain places, and there's a whole process for getting your patient enrolled."

Some physicians consider it "an uncompensated and time-consuming lift," he said, and prescribe other medications that aren't suitable for early treatment, such as high-dose steroids.

Nearly 92% of Americans over 65 are fully vaccinated, and about 70% have received at least one booster, [according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). [Reformulated COVID-19 booster shots targeting the omicron variant](#) of the coronavirus are likely this fall, but health experts don't expect they'll have a significant impact on the death rate.

"The vaccines we already have are still highly effective against serious illness and deaths ... so I don't think the bivalent vaccines are going to be a game changer in that regard," Dowdy said. "What they may do is help curb transmission somewhat because they may be more effective against infection."

Experts said what will protect those at high risk of severe COVID-19 and death is staying up to date on recommended vaccines and seeking early treatment with proven therapies.

"This plateau now, as horrible as it is, is unfortunately lower than it's going to be if we don't do a great job this fall with boosters and improving education about how to properly manage COVID," Griffin said.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/03 Yemen warring sides renew truce for 2mo.</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2022/08/03/yemen-Civil-War-truce-renewed/4541659501293/">https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2022/08/03/yemen-Civil-War-truce-renewed/4541659501293/</a>
GIST	<p>Aug. 3 (UPI) -- The warring sides in Yemen's bloody civil war have agreed to extend their truce another two months, a top U.N. official said while expressing hope that an expanded agreement could be reached as soon as possible.</p> <p>Hans Grundberg, the U.N. special envoy for Yemen, announced in a statement Tuesday that the nation's internationally recognized government and the Iran-backed Houthi rebels had agreed to a second renewal of the U.N.-mediated truce, which first went into effect in April.</p>

"The main objective of the current truce continues to be to provide tangible relief to civilians and to create a conducive environment for reaching a peaceful settlement to the conflict through a comprehensive political process," he said.

Along with the truce, the first two-month agreement included the resumption of a commercial international flight a week between Houthi-controlled Sanaa and each of Amman, Jordan, and Cairo, Egypt, while 18 fuel ships were also allowed to port in Rebel-controlled Hodeida.

Amid the two-months following the renewal in June, movement on achieving tangible agreements appears to have slowed with Grundberg including some of them for negotiations to be held between now and when the current truce is set to expire in October.

Specifics of Tuesday's truce renewal were not made immediately available, but Grundberg said it includes a commitment from both sides to "intensity negotiations" on expanding the agreement as soon as possible.

The U.N. official has presented a proposal on that expanded agreement, which includes a disbursement mechanism for regular payment of civil servant salaries and civilian pensions as well as the opening of roads to the southwestern Houthi-controlled city of Taiz and other governorates, a previous goal not yet achieved.

It also includes opening additional destinations for inbound and outbound flights from Sanaa International Airport and the regular flow of fuel to Hodeida ports.

"An expanded agreement would also provide an opportunity to negotiate a nationwide cease-fire, humanitarian and economic issues and to prepare for the resumption of the Yemeni-led political process under U.N. auspices to reach a sustainable and just peace," he said.

The truce extension, first renewed on June 2, was renewed as it was about to expire on Tuesday.

During the four-month truce, the U.N. says it has seen a 60% reduction in civilian casualties and a nearly 50% decrease in the displacement of civilians.

The Yemen civil war, which began in 2014 when Houthi rebels stormed the capital Sanaa, has turned the country into what the U.N. has described as "the world's worst humanitarian crisis."

According to the U.N.'s Yemen office, 24.1 million people, which represents 80% of its population, are in need of humanitarian aid and protection due to the fighting with more than 14 million in acute need.

As of the end of last year, the U.N. estimates 377,000 people have been killed in war.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Tuesday that the United States welcomes the extension while urging both parties to "not let this opportunity pass" and build upon it lasting peace.

"The parties must work with Special Envoy Grundberg to urgently reach agreement on the expanded truce agreement he has presented," he said in a statement. "First and foremost, the Houthis must open major roads to Taiz, Yemen's third largest city, and alleviate the suffering of hundreds of thousands of Yemenis who have been under siege-like conditions since 2015."

Norwegian Refugee Council's Yemen country director, Erin Hutchinson, remarked on how achievements have slowed in the last months while calling on the warring sides to ensure Yemenis will continue to enjoy the new-found peace that they have been experiencing.

"We hope this two-month extension will allow for the re-opening of roads linking cities and regions, enable more displaced people to return to their homes safely and ensure humanitarian aid can reach



	people who have been out of reach for far too long because of hostilities," Hutchinson said in a statement.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/03 Official: China was told of Pelosi trip in July</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/no-plans-blinken-meet-chinese-russian-counterparts-cambodia-this-week-senior-us-2022-08-03/">https://www.reuters.com/world/no-plans-blinken-meet-chinese-russian-counterparts-cambodia-this-week-senior-us-2022-08-03/</a>
GIST	<p>TOKYO, Aug 3 (Reuters) - The possibility of U.S. house speaker Nancy Pelosi visiting Taiwan was raised with the Chinese government's top diplomat recently and there are no plans for the two countries' foreign ministers to meet this week in Cambodia, a senior U.S. official said on Wednesday.</p> <p>U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken discussed the potential for Pelosi's visit with counterpart Wang Yi during a G20 meeting in Bali that lasted more than five hours, and said any such trip would be entirely Pelosi's decision and independent of the U.S. government.</p> <p>"The question is whether Beijing will try to use the trip as some kind of excuse to take steps that could be escalatory or that could somehow produce conflict," the senior State Department official told reporters in Tokyo, adding that Beijing should not overreact to a trip that was neither unusual nor unprecedented.</p> <p>"China should not use this as a pretext to continue what it's been doing, which is seeking to change the status quo with regard to Taiwan," the official said.</p> <p>"And if any escalation or crisis were to somehow follow her visit, it would be on Beijing."</p> <p>The Chinese foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment on Wednesday.</p> <p>China vented its fury on Wednesday over what was the highest-level U.S. visit to Taiwan in a quarter of a century, stepping up military activity in surrounding waters and suspending imports of some products from Taiwan.</p> <p>China considers Taiwan part of its territory and has never renounced using force to bring it under its control.</p> <p>Blinken was en route to Cambodia for a series of meetings that will culminate in Friday's ASEAN Regional Forum, a security-focused gathering of 27 countries including China, Japan, Russia, Britain and Australia.</p> <p>The official also said there would be no direct meeting in Phnom Penh with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, adding Moscow had shown no indication it would end its hostilities in Ukraine.</p> <p>"If we actually saw any kind of meaningful diplomatic opening to help end the aggression, we would, of course, engage, but we've not seen that."</p> <p>This week's gathering is hosted by the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which the United States hopes can discuss how to "both sustain and increase pressure" on Myanmar's junta to end its crackdown on its opponents.</p> <p>The official also said the United States wanted to strengthen relations with ASEAN chair Cambodia, China's biggest ally in Southeast Asia, but stressed the importance that it show transparency about its engagement with Beijing's military.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/03 Inflation weighs on back-to-school buying</b>
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SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/inflation-health-prices-shopping-f0b630ffa0143399181e518be521e9d5">https://apnews.com/article/inflation-health-prices-shopping-f0b630ffa0143399181e518be521e9d5</a>
GIST	<p>NEW YORK (AP) — To understand the impact of surging inflation on this year’s back-to-school spending, look no further than children’s rain boots with motifs like frogs and ladybugs made by Washington Shoe Co.</p> <p>Spending held steady for these evergreen items even after the Kent, Washington-based business was forced to pass along 15% price increases in January to its retail clients because of soaring transportation costs. But by May, as gas and food prices also surged, shoppers abruptly shifted away from the \$35 higher-end rain boots to the no-frills versions that run \$5 to \$10 cheaper, its CEO Karl Moehring said.</p> <p>“We are seeing consumers shift down,” said Moehring, noting dramatic 20% sales swings in opposite directions for both types of products. “Wages are not keeping up with inflation.”</p> <p>This back-to-school shopping season, parents — particularly in the low to middle income bracket — are focusing on the basics while also trading down to cheaper stores amid surging inflation, which hit a new 40-year high in June.</p> <p>Last week, Walmart noted higher prices on gas and food are forcing shoppers to make fewer purchases of discretionary items, particularly clothing. Best Buy, the nation’s largest consumer electronics chain, cited that inflation has dampened consumer spending on gadgets. Both companies cut their profit forecasts as a result.</p> <p>Such financial struggles amid the industry’s second-most important shopping season behind the winter holidays mark a big difference from a year ago when many low-income shoppers, flush with government stimulus and buoyed by wage increases, spent freely.</p> <p>Matt Priest, CEO of trade group Footwear Distributors &amp; Retailers of America, noted that last year, the group’s retail members saw a noticeable uptick in online sales mid-month when shoppers received their monthly child tax credit checks that amounted to a couple of hundred dollars. This season, without that bump, he expects shoppers will buy fewer shoes for their children and rely on private label brands.</p> <p>Inflation has squeezed household finances for Jessica Reyes, 34, who took her daughters Jalya, 7, and Jenesis, 5, to a “Back to School Bash” event last month in the Chicago’s northside that offered free backpacks filled with supplies for students.</p> <p>“I feel like everything is going up these days,” she said at the event. “We’re a one-income household right now ... so I think it’s greatly affected us in all areas, in bills and in house necessities and school necessities.”</p> <p>Out shopping, her girls were drawn to the school supplies featuring TV characters and animals they love, but she’ll focus on the plain versions.</p> <p>“They want the cute ones, you know, the kitty ones. And those are always more expensive than the simple ones. And same thing with folders, or notebooks, or pencils,” Reyes said.</p> <p>Earlier, Manny Colon and his daughters Jubilee, 8, and Audrey, 5, stopped by the back-to-school event to pick out backpacks.</p> <p>Colon, 38, works at his daughters’ elementary school. He said his spouse has had to pick up extra work because of high prices for school supplies, groceries and gas.</p> <p>“I think it’s definitely impacted us,” he said.</p> <p>Multiple forecasts point to a solid back-to-school shopping season.</p>



Mastercard SpendingPulse, which tracks spending across all payment forms including cash, forecasts back-to-school spending will be up 7.5% from July 14 through Sept. 5 compared with the year-ago period when sales rose 11%. For the 2020 back-to-school period, sales fell 0.8% as the pandemic wreaked havoc on schools' reopening plans and back-to-school shopping.

Still, higher prices are propping up much of the numbers.

A basket of roughly a dozen supply items showed a price increase of nearly 15% on average for this back-to-school season compared with a year ago, according to retail analytics firm DataWeave. The price of backpacks are up nearly 12% to an average of \$70, for example.

Back 2 School America, an Illinois-based nonprofit that distributes back-to-school kits to kids from low-income families, has seen "a significant increase in costs of supplies," including a 10% increase from their vendor with another possible mark-up on the way, said the organization's CEO Matthew Kurtzman. And shipping costs have also gone up.

Thanks to increased support this year, Back 2 School America will be able to cover the new costs and is on track to distribute more kits than ever before — 12,000 so far, and more than 30,000 by the end of August, Kurtzman said. But the funding isn't guaranteed in the future as worries about a recession increase.

Retailers face big challenges to get shoppers to spend, particularly on clothing.

Walmart said last week it was taking extra discounts on clothing to clear out inventory. Analysts believe those sales will exert more pressure on other rivals to discount more to stay competitive. However, Walmart said it's encouraged by the early signs for sales of school supplies.

Meanwhile, Gap's low-price Old Navy division is guaranteeing a price freeze on its denim from July 29 through the end of September.

As for Washington Shoe, Moehring said he's shifting production away from higher priced children's boots to more value-priced products in the months ahead. The company still sees annual sales ahead of last year, but he's being cautious.

"I believe it is a muddy outlook," he said.

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HEADLINE	08/03 Ukraine braces for brutal fight in south
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/ukraine-braces-for-brutal-fight-for-occupied-southern-regions-as-referendum-looms-11659519001">https://www.wsj.com/articles/ukraine-braces-for-brutal-fight-for-occupied-southern-regions-as-referendum-looms-11659519001</a>
GIST	<p>KYSELIVKA, Ukraine—When Ukrainian troops deployed in Kyselivka on the Kherson front line in April, the village's empty homes provided some protection from relentless Russian shelling.</p> <p>"Now, there aren't many places left to hide here anymore," said a soldier who goes by his call sign Kulak, pointing to a landscape of craters and twisted trees. "Most houses have burned down from incendiary shells, and the church is gone, too. It is never quiet down here."</p> <p>No civilians live in the village anymore. A white goat wandered from one wrecked house to another, looking for food. Russian drones with motion detectors frequently hover over the spot from which Kulak <a href="#">observes Russian movements</a> about a mile away and directs artillery strikes.</p> <p>The unit's mission, he said, is to hold firm. "The Russians shoot left and right, into the steppe, anywhere," he said. "As for us, we have to economize the ammunition, so we only fire according to precise coordinates."</p>

The situation, for now at least, is similar across the Kherson front line that stretches for more than 100 miles. This strategic terrain represents Russia's only foothold [on the western bank of the Dnipro River](#) and a potential avenue of advance on to the ports of Mykolaiv, Odessa and the rest of Ukraine's remaining Black Sea shoreline.

"Neither side has the forces or the equipment to begin a decisive offensive here, and so both are preparing for positional warfare, so far," said Maj. Roman Kovalyov, the executive officer of a Ukrainian battalion in another part of the Kherson region. Much of the front line in Kherson runs along the Inhulets River that, while relatively shallow, has turned out to be a significant obstacle for major troop movements, he said.

"The Russians are like locusts. We keep killing them and they just keep sending more, with no end," said one of the battalion's artillery commanders.

A region roughly the size of Belgium, Kherson is one place in Ukraine where Moscow's initial assumptions of a lightning conquest proved correct. Russian forces overran most of the region in the first two days of the war in February, as many local security officials fled or conspired with the invaders.

Retaking Kherson, or at least the western bank of Dnipro that includes its capital, has become Ukraine's critical priority in the next phase of the war.

"Kherson has a huge strategic importance, politically because it is the only regional capital taken by Russia, and militarily because if the Russians solidify their control there, they will certainly use it to try to move ahead and take our entire coast," said Andriy Zagorodnyuk, a former Ukrainian minister of defense who advises the government.

Time is a factor. Moscow-appointed authorities are planning a mid-September referendum on annexing Kherson and other parts of occupied southern Ukraine to Russia, a move that would formalize a land bridge from the Russian border to the Crimean Peninsula that Russia absorbed in 2014. "The referendum represents a big threat, and so we need to ruin the plans of the occupiers," said Serhiy Khlan, a member of the Kherson regional legislature who escaped to Kyiv-controlled areas and now serves in the Ukrainian military.

While the bulk of the fighting during the past three months occurred in Ukraine's eastern Donbas areas, Kyiv has also conducted a series of local operations in Kherson, retaking a handful of villages. The arrival of U.S.-provided HIMARS missile systems in recent weeks has allowed Ukraine to blunt the Russian offensive in the Donbas.

Now, the focus of the war is increasingly shifting to the south. Russia has begun transferring some of its best units from Donbas to Kherson. Ukraine, meanwhile, is busy training new brigades that would bolster existing forces and provide the manpower for the planned offensive. The majority of soldiers in Ukraine's front-line units have been mobilized since the initial invasion, often with minimal training. "Everyone's motivation is sky high, but their skills are usually zero," said one front-line commander.

Ukraine's General Staff is keeping a tight lid on its plans for Kherson, where the open terrain makes surprise crucial to the success of any offensive. Kyiv's strategy so far has focused on slowly choking off the Russian contingent on the western bank of the Dnipro.

In recent weeks, Ukrainian HIMARS strikes disabled the Antonivsky bridge and a nearby railway bridge linking the city of Kherson to the river's eastern shore, leaving Russian forces with only one other reliable access route, via the dam of the Nova Kakhovka hydropower station 50 miles to the northeast. Ukrainian strikes have also damaged a key bridge between the dam and the city of Kherson, and struck dozens of Russian weapons and fuel warehouses and command centers across the region.

As a result of these hits, "the intensity of enemy fire has decreased somewhat," Lt. Col. Serhiy Shatalov, a Ukrainian battalion commander deployed on the Kherson front. "This gives us an opportunity to improve

our positions and to seize more advantageous heights, not letting them dig in ahead of the rains and the bad weather of fall and winter.”

The question for Ukrainian leaders is whether the timing of Kyiv’s Kherson offensive should take into account the political calendar imposed by Russia. In the five months since capturing Kherson, Moscow has managed to recruit a small but relatively prominent cohort of local collaborators.

They include the former mayor of Kherson, Vladimir Saldo, who now leads the region’s Russian-appointed administration that has plastered the city with billboards proclaiming “Kherson, with Russia Forever.” In speech after speech, Mr. Saldo says that Kherson should be used as a springboard for liberating what he calls the “historically Russian” cities of Mykolaiv and Odessa. Russia has already distributed thousands of passports in Kherson, introduced the Russian ruble, opened branches of Russian banks and set up its own mobile-phone network after taking down Ukrainian carriers.

For now, however, most people in Kherson refuse to work with the Russians—in part because of sporadic assassination attempts that target officials and policemen who have chosen to join the occupation authorities. In the city of Nova Kakhovka, the region’s second-largest, only one out of 14 school directors are cooperating with the new administration, which plans to reopen schools under the Russian rather than Ukrainian curriculum on Sept. 1, said Mayor Volodymyr Kovalenko.

“People are awaiting liberation so much,” said Mr. Kovalenko, who escaped to Kyiv-controlled territory in mid-July. “The absolute majority doesn’t even think of collaborating.”

Allowing Russia to carry out the September referendum could change that, a senior Ukrainian law-enforcement official warned. “Right now, most people in the occupied areas are sitting on the fence and waiting to see which side will win,” the official warned. “But if we don’t retake Kherson before it is annexed by Russia, the annexation will make them choose the Russian camp and we will lose these people forever.”

As much as half of the region’s prewar population of just over one million has since managed to find a way out to government-controlled areas or abroad, Ukrainian officials estimate. Some braved dirt roads in the steppes, some took rowboats up the Dnipro, while others cycled through forests around Russian checkpoints.

Ivan Petrov, from a Russian-controlled village in northern Kherson, said he made his way out through fields and across a river a month ago, after his family ran out of food—and as Russian soldiers began digging emplacements for tanks next to his home. “That’s the morning when we realized it’s time to go,” he said. He said he now plans to enroll in the Ukrainian military: “I can’t wait for the Russians to be chased out so we can return.”

Another escapee, Serhiy Bernadskyi, said he had worked for two months in the fields to afford the smugglers’ fee and, upon arriving in government-controlled territory, headed to a Ukrainian military recruitment office. He said he was turned down because his mother remains behind Russian lines, making him a potential security risk. “I’m heartbroken. I feel like a child who can finally see the toy that he wants and can’t get it,” Mr. Bernadskyi said.

In recent months, Russian intelligence services have detained hundreds of people they suspect of sympathizing with Ukraine in Kherson, including the city’s elected mayor Ihor Kolykhaev, taken in custody in late June. Appearing almost every day on Russian TV as the face of the new regime in Kherson is the deputy head of the occupation administration, Kiril Stremousov, a former antivaccine blogger. At a gathering of local residents, almost all of them women of retirement age, Mr. Stremousov announced that “Ukraine’s authority is over” and promised free medical care and generous Russian welfare benefits, as well as “restoring normal families and providing normal sober guys to the ladies.” He wore a T-shirt emblazoned with the word “Russia” under his flak jacket and a pistol on his belt.

	<p>In Russian-occupied villages of Kherson closer to the front lines, no more than one-tenth of the prewar population has remained, said Lt. Col. Shatalov. “The only people left on the other side are those who love the Russian world and want to live under it,” he said, pointing out that some locals were directing Russian fire on his men when the battalion seized the village of Potiomkine in late June.</p> <p>That small push forward involved heavy fighting and significant casualties. “It took us three days just for the village of Potiomkine. People must understand what kind of fantastic reserves must be accumulated for a rapid move into the depth of the enemy lines, crossing 100 kilometers in a few days,” Lt. Col. Shatalov said.</p> <p>Out of the Kherson region’s 49 local communities, only one—Kochubeivka in the north—is fully controlled by Ukrainian forces. When the Russians occupied Kochubeivka in March, they executed a villager for wearing fatigues in his garden, looted residents’ homes and scrawled “All evil is from them” next to the word “U.S.A.” on a plaque noting American assistance to the municipality, said Mayor Liudmyla Kostiuk.</p> <p>Unlike in villages closer to the front line, which remain largely abandoned because of constant Russian shelling, life has begun to return to Kochubeivka after Russian forces were pushed further away in recent weeks. The local store has reopened, with workers recently installing a new door.</p> <p>Ms. Kostiuk said that she is praying every day for the liberation of the rest of Kherson. “We all want it to happen as soon as possible, but we’re also patient and realistic,” she said. “It is important that as many of our defenders as possible remain alive. And so we wait—and we don’t just wait, we help.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/03 Japan learns to live with Covid</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/japan-learns-to-live-with-covid-19-as-locals-flock-to-travel-spots">https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/japan-learns-to-live-with-covid-19-as-locals-flock-to-travel-spots</a>
GIST	<p>TOKYO (BLOOMBERG) - Japan's residents are flocking to tourism hotspots and snapping up normally hard-to-get restaurant reservations even as Covid-19 infections surge to a record, in a sign one of the slowest major economies to fully reopen is adjusting to life with the virus.</p> <p>Domestic travel is booming as people enjoy their first restriction-free summer since 2019 and as still-tight border rules keep away the hordes of foreign visitors that typically crowd popular attractions.</p> <p>Most residents are shaking off concerns about the current wave of virus cases, with travel agencies HIS and JTB reporting no obvious rise in cancellations. Nippon Travel Agency says any spots that become available are quickly booked.</p> <p>The spread of highly contagious virus variants doesn't seem to be dampening enthusiasm so far, even with the 7-day rolling average in new infections reaching 1,628 per million people, the highest among G-7 nations.</p> <p>Japan's hospital beds are slowly filling up, reaching 48 per cent occupancy as of July 27, according to data compiled by broadcaster NHK. The death rate is just 0.87 per million people, the lowest in the G-7.</p> <p>The zest for domestic travel suggests that the world's third-largest economy, one of the most cautious countries in reopening and with border curbs that are only eclipsed by mainland China's strict rules, is increasingly ready to move on.</p> <p>Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has ruled out re-imposing nationwide curbs, and has said that his government may look to downgrade the status of Covid-19 to endemic after the wave, which would allow Covid-19 patients to be treated at general clinics and remove the requirement for closely tracking case numbers.</p>

Before the pandemic, Japan was at the peak of a tourism boom, welcoming almost 32 million visitors in 2019 who spent 4.8 trillion yen (\$49.8 billion). But the arrival of Covid-19 spurred a two-year border closure that effectively sealed off the country. It's only recently been eased, albeit with a cap on daily international arrivals of just 20,000 and other restrictions that leave the industry a long way from a full recovery.

That has devastated businesses that rely on overseas visitors, but it's paved the way for a revival in domestic tourism. Local travel plans for July and August were 90 per cent of pre-pandemic levels, according to a HIS survey published in June.

Tables at popular high-end restaurants have become easier to book as there's no competition with foreign tourists, said Mr Yuki Wakasaki, an official at online restaurant booking site Omakase, operated by GMO Internet.

Rental car operators can't keep up with demand over the summer after reducing their inventory to cut costs and as supply chain disruptions roil the auto sector, according to Japan's industry group.

Still, a continued case spike may spook local authorities and high-risk groups, like the elderly. Osaka has urged older people to refrain from going out unless necessary and Okinawa has imposed social-distancing measures.

Nippon Travel warned the pace of bookings could slow if people become more cautious, while Japan Airlines said people are likely to change plans only if restrictions come into effect.

"If the number of new cases continues to beat records, demand for travel and consumption will likely to fall despite the absence of restrictions," said Mr Takuto Yasuda, an economist at NLI Research Institute, in an interview. "If the government declares a state of emergency, it will have a greater negative impact on the economy."

Most Japanese are still pushing ahead with their domestic travel plans, bolstering the case for a pivot to living with the virus that would bring the country in line with much of the rest of the world.

Residents have been highly compliant with social distancing rules throughout the pandemic, with near-universal mask-wearing, high vaccination levels and limited social activity.

That has helped to keep Japan's death rate low without the government ever officially imposing lockdowns. After more than two years of pandemic discipline, many are ready for normal life again.

Mr Mitsuru Matsushita took part in his first group trip in three years in June. The president of Shizuoka-based staffing company Flair organised a three-day retreat for his 20 employees on the southern island of Shikoku, where they visited local attractions, stayed in a hotel, went to bars and restaurants and enjoyed karaoke.

"I'm so glad we did it," said Mr Matsushita, who said a shift to remote work meant employees had lost their sense of belonging. "Everyone was happy."

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HEADLINE	08/02 Fed officials signal additional rate rises
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/fed-official-says-economy-needs-rate-setting-that-slows-economic-growth-11659456091?mod=hp_major_pos1#cxrecs_s">https://www.wsj.com/articles/fed-official-says-economy-needs-rate-setting-that-slows-economic-growth-11659456091?mod=hp_major_pos1#cxrecs_s</a>
GIST	Federal Reserve officials said they expected to keep lifting borrowing costs through at least early next year to slow the economy and bring down high inflation, pushing back against some investors' hopes of a milder rate path.

Chicago Fed President Charles Evans told reporters Tuesday that he hoped the central bank would be able to moderate [its interest-rate rises](#) over the remainder of the year after increasing rates in unusually large increments at its past two meetings. But he held out the possibility of another supsize rate increase at the Fed's next meeting on Sept. 20-21.

In projections submitted at the Fed's meeting in mid-June, Mr. Evans said he anticipated raising rates by a half-percentage point at the [central bank's meeting in September](#) after completing two rate increases of 0.75 percentage point, or 75 basis points.

"The kinds of things that would make larger rate increases more important, like in September, would be if you really thought things weren't improving," Mr. Evans told reporters at a briefing Tuesday. "I think that there's enough time to play out that 50 is a reasonable assessment, but 75 could also be OK."

After that, Mr. Evans said he hoped the central bank would be able to continue raising rates in more traditional, quarter percentage point increments at its last two meetings of the year, in November and December, and through early 2023. "In spite of less favorable inflation reports than I expected in June, I'm still hopeful that that rate path is a reasonable one after all," Mr. Evans said.

The Fed raised rates by 0.75 point to a range between 2.25% and 2.5% at its meeting last week. The central bank has increased rates four times this year from near zero in March.

Fed officials' comments on the policy outlook coincided with a steep drop in bond prices Tuesday, sending up yields. The two-year Treasury note, which is especially sensitive to Fed policy expectations, closed at 3.077%, up from 2.909% on Monday, the largest one-day increase since June 13.

Cleveland Fed President Loretta Mester said that with inflation so far above the Fed's 2% target, she was anxious about prematurely concluding that price pressures were easing.

"We have more work to do because we have not seen that turn in inflation," she said in a webinar with the Washington Post. "It's got to be a sustained, several months of evidence that inflation has first peaked—we haven't even seen that yet—and that it's moving down."

San Francisco Fed President Mary Daly said the central bank's effort to bring down prices by slowing demand was nowhere near done and pushed back against some investors' expectations that the central bank would pivot to rate cuts next year after raising rates to around 3.5% this year.

"My modal outlook, or the outlook I think is most likely, is really that we raise interest rates and then we hold them there for a while at whatever level we think is appropriate," she said in an interview streamed on LinkedIn.

Mr. Evans said he was watching economic data closely for signs that higher borrowing costs are rippling through investment, spending and hiring decisions. "Interest rates are higher, but they're not necessarily tight," he said.

With the rate path Mr. Evans outlined Tuesday, rates would rise to a range between 3.25% and 3.5% by December, which are levels that could slow growth and [bring down inflation](#). "If we don't see improvement before too long, we might have to rethink the path a little bit higher," he said.

Mr. Evans, who is set [to retire in January](#), said he had thought two or three rate increases of a quarter-point could be appropriate early next year. The Fed could continue raising rates for somewhat longer if inflation doesn't show more progress declining to the Fed's 2% target, he added.

Mr. Evans said he would prefer to achieve a gentle incline once rates are closer to a slightly restrictive setting to avoid a situation in which the Fed lifts rates faster and then has to cut them a few months later.



	“I’d rather have a path that more smoothly gets up to where we want and doesn’t have to retrace quickly for a reason that we weren’t expecting,” he said.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/03 Tunisia extinguishes Arab Spring spark</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/08/03/tunisia-constitution-referendum-saied-democracy/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/08/03/tunisia-constitution-referendum-saied-democracy/</a>
GIST	<p>TUNIS — Three days before Tunisians voted on a new constitution their president pledged would propel them into prosperity, Nori Saif sat on a bench downtown, rattling off the prices smugglers charge to sneak young men into Europe.</p> <p>The cheapest journey, he said, would run him around \$1,200. A smuggler with a better guarantee could cost more than \$3,000.</p> <p>As for the vote?</p> <p>“I only heard about it yesterday,” he said. “We have no hope. Nothing will change.”</p> <p>Eleven years ago, masses of civilians gathered on this same avenue in Tunis, calling for autocrat Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali to step down. It worked. Ben Ali fled the country and later died in exile. Tunisia began the long process of remaking itself as a democracy — the only one to survive the turmoil of the Arab Spring.</p> <p>Now, Saif, who is 27 and recently left his home in a small town south of the capital, was sleeping outside and looking for any work to help fund his migration to Europe. Like many other young Tunisians of his generation, the spark of hope that ignited the Arab Spring has been extinguished. Disenchanted by ineffective politicians and paralyzed by a worsening economic crisis, he sees only one path forward: leaving the country.</p> <p>At the same time, many others in Tunisia have put their faith in a leader who tells them he can fix their lives if they just vote to expand his power.</p> <p>The sense of despair is a reversal of the shared optimism of 2011, when young Tunisians flooded back into the country to support the revolution. Their collective burst of hope for something better was so contagious that the spirit of change quickly spread across the Arab world.</p> <p>“In places where there are dictators, people saw a little country that made its revolution and succeeded,” said Mohamed Abbou, a lawyer and politician who was imprisoned during the Ben Ali regime.</p> <p>Tunisia set an example as a country that accepted Islamist political parties, including the moderate Ennahda, which was long part of coalition governments. As other countries in the region slipped back into autocracy or war, Tunisia wrote a new constitution and secured certain freedoms that left activists elsewhere envious.</p> <p>But over time, the country’s new and fragile democracy faltered. Political infighting left lawmakers divided and unable to overcome economic crises or deliver on the promises of the revolution.</p> <p>Then in 2019, Tunisians voted Kais Saied in as president. A little-known candidate who taught law at Tunis University, his supporters saw him as the antithesis of the political elite — someone with a clean record who would root out corruption and move Tunisia closer to its democratic ideals. It soon became clear that he had little time for the checks and balances of the country’s fledgling democratic system.</p> <p>Last summer, amid worsening economic conditions, constant quarrels with lawmakers and a massive coronavirus outbreak, Saied suspended parliament and fired his own prime minister. He described it as a chance to weed out the corruption that he said was causing the deadlock. Many of his supporters stood by</p>

him, even as his opponents decried it as a coup. Taking full control, he promised, was the only way to fix the nation.

But soon even his initial fan base began to view his growing hold on power as a threat to Tunisia's democracy, especially after he curtailed the independence of the judiciary, dissolved parliament and introduced a controversial new constitution putting even more power in the hands of the president.

Tunisia "was a source of inspiration that was attacked by the corrupt and then by a crazy person," said Abbou, who supported Saied's decision to suspend parliament last summer but now vehemently opposes him.

He, like many other Tunisian political thinkers, says Saied took advantage of people's economic discontent. What he's advertising is a new and more prosperous Tunisia, Abbou said. But what he is actually selling is a dismantling of the country's democracy by gradually designing a system of one-man rule.

Anouar Ben Kaddour, a leader in the powerful Tunisian General Labor Union, said Saied was able to undo the existing system by presenting a deceptive set of solutions to young people.

"Young people waited 10 years; they didn't see anything," Ben Kaddour said. "Everyone wants to leave."

"We can't use populism to say to everyone that tomorrow we are going to resolve the problems," he said.

It's not that Saied's supporters were opposed to democracy, explained Monica Marks, a professor of Middle East politics at NYU Abu Dhabi. They were just convinced that he would be able to tackle the country's long running problems.

"They didn't come onto the street [last summer] thinking they were burning down democracy. They came out on the street thinking this was the best shot to deliver revolutionary dreams," she said.

Some firm believers still think Saied can deliver those dreams, she said. Others, angry at the political stagnation, now acknowledge they are prioritizing stability over democracy.

Many Tunisians have blamed the Islamist Ennahda party for the country's political failures — claims that party officials say are efforts to scapegoat them for systemic problems.

The party's leader, Rached Ghannouchi, a former political prisoner who went into exile in Britain before returning to Tunisia after the revolution, is now under investigation over allegations he participated in money laundering — a charge he vehemently denies. He acknowledged that resistance to Saied's agenda has been weakened by a lack of unity among lawmakers and that not enough progress came out of the revolution.

"It is true the past 10 years were not a decade of economic prosperity," he said, while still maintaining that "10 years of freedom were not erased by [Saied] and that it's still in the minds and hearts of the people."

His party immediately declared Saied's move to suspend parliament last summer a "coup" and continues to decry his actions.

"We stood up and tried to deliver as much as we [could]," said Said Ferjani, an Ennahda lawmaker from the since dissolved parliament who was imprisoned and tortured in Tunisia in the 1980s.

The same people who have been disappointed by Ennahda and other politicians over the last decade, he said, cannot claim their dreams have since been realized under Saied either.

"At the end of the day now, the choice is between accepting dictatorship and bowing down to it, or to stand up against it and fight it ... in a civil way," he said.

The third option is to keep looking elsewhere.

For Saif, that means focusing on finding a way to Europe — and fast.

His mother is sick, and the rising pressure to support her has left him “scared to stay here.”

“This is a country where only policemen and the rich live happily,” he said, making the same complaint of his peers who took to the streets 10 years ago in hopes of something better.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Illinois, Calif. monkeypox state emergency</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/08/01/california-monkeypox-state-of-emergency-newsom/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/08/01/california-monkeypox-state-of-emergency-newsom/</a>
GIST	<p>The governors of California and Illinois on Monday declared states of emergency in an effort to bolster their responses to the monkeypox outbreak.</p> <p>California, the most populous state in the United States, had recorded 827 monkeypox <a href="#">cases</a> as of Monday, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — second to New York, which had recorded 1,390 cases as of Monday and last week <a href="#">declared</a> a public health emergency. Illinois had recorded 520 cases. The nationwide tally is more than 5,800.</p> <p>The declaration by California Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) allows emergency medical services workers to administer the monkeypox vaccine, as pharmacists had also recently been permitted to do, Newsom said in a <a href="#">statement</a>. “It is critical to maximize the number of personnel who can administer vaccines within this outreach effort,” he wrote in the <a href="#">emergency declaration</a>. “Expanding the pool of eligible vaccinators will substantially aid current efforts and support anticipated further vaccination efforts upon receipt of additional doses from the federal government.”</p> <p>Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker (D) said in a <a href="#">statement</a> that the effort to prevent the spread of the virus “requires the full mobilization of all available public health resources.” He said he was declaring a state of emergency “to expand the resources and coordination efforts of state agencies in responding to, treating, and preventing the spread” of monkeypox.</p> <p>With a “limited supply” of vaccines from the federal government, California is distributing vaccines to local health authorities “based on a formula that considers [the area’s] current monkeypox cases and number of high-risk individuals,” according to the declaration. California has received more than 61,000 doses of the vaccine, according to Newsom’s office.</p> <p>“We’ll continue to work with the federal government to secure more vaccines, raise awareness about reducing risk, and stand with the LGBTQ community fighting stigmatization,” Newsom said. Outbreaks have so far been overwhelmingly concentrated in men who have sex with men, though anyone can contract the virus. <a href="#">Advocates have urged officials</a> to avoid repeating the mistakes of the AIDS crisis, when the virus’s devastating effects on the gay community were minimized.</p> <p>There are increasing concerns about the federal supply of monkeypox vaccines. The United States recently received hundreds of thousands of additional doses, but is not expected to receive another shipment until October at the earliest — with cases expected to continue multiplying until then amid a dwindling supply of shots.</p> <p>In a signal that the Biden administration is ramping up its response to the outbreak, the White House is expected to name Robert J. Fenton Jr., an official at the Federal Emergency Management Agency, as the national monkeypox coordinator, along with a deputy coordinator, Demetre Daskalakis of the CDC, <a href="#">The Washington Post reported</a> Monday.</p>

Most of California's monkeypox cases are concentrated in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Last week, San Francisco [declared a public health emergency](#) over the outbreak. Mayor London Breed (D) said Thursday that monkeypox cases there had doubled to 261 in just a week. As of Monday, there were 310 [cases](#) reported in the city.

The Biden administration has weighed whether to declare the outbreak a public health emergency, with the [World Health Organization last month labeling the rising cases worldwide](#) a "Public Health Emergency of International Concern" — its highest level of alert.

"In short, we have an outbreak that has spread around the world rapidly through new modes of transmission about which we understand too little," WHO Director General [Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus](#) said in a statement at the time.

[Monkeypox](#) mainly spreads through direct contact with infectious rashes, scabs or bodily fluids. It can also be transmitted from respiratory secretions during prolonged face-to-face contact, or during intimate physical contact, such as kissing, cuddling or sex — though monkeypox is not considered a traditional sexually transmitted disease like syphilis or gonorrhea.

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HEADLINE	08/02 Global monkeypox cases: 25,000, 10 deaths
SOURCE	<a href="https://arstechnica.com/science/2022/08/monkeypox-encephalitis-deaths-probed-as-global-cases-top-25000/">https://arstechnica.com/science/2022/08/monkeypox-encephalitis-deaths-probed-as-global-cases-top-25000/</a>
GIST	<p>As global monkeypox cases continue to climb, health officials are investigating reports of several new deaths, which includes the first batch of deaths reported from countries outside where the virus is endemic in animals.</p> <p>The global case count is now <a href="#">over 25,000</a>, with more than 6,000 in the US. The global death toll is now at least 10. Previously, officials reported <a href="#">three deaths from Nigeria and two from the Central African Republic</a>, both of which have historically reported monkeypox spillover cases. On Monday, Ghana, which has also historically had cases, reported its <a href="#">first death</a>. At the same time, four new deaths have been reported in Spain (2), Brazil (1), and India (1). Officials at the World Health Organization are still waiting for more clinical information on the cases.</p> <p>Initial media reports suggest that the death in Brazil was a <a href="#">41-year-old man who had lymphoma and was immunocompromised</a> and was therefore at higher risk of severe disease.</p> <p>The other three cases reportedly died from encephalitis—inflammation of the brain—which is a <a href="#">known potential complication</a> of monkeypox. In India, officials said a 22-year-old man died after returning from a trip to United Arab Emirates, where he initially tested positive for the virus. He delayed treatment while he was in the UAE, but then deteriorated upon his return to India, dying in the hospital after <a href="#">being placed on a ventilator</a>. Officials there told reporters that he had <a href="#">also tested positive for Epstein-Barr virus</a>, the cause of infectious mononucleosis, and that they were still investigating other possible underlying health conditions.</p> <p>In Spain, a 31-year-old and a 44-year-old reportedly died of monkeypox-associated encephalitis. Reports so far suggest that both were previously healthy and not immunocompromised.</p> <p>The clade of monkeypox virus spreading in the multinational outbreak is historically thought to have a fatality rate of up to 3 percent in endemic countries. Though deaths remain rare in the current multinational outbreak, health officials say they're seeing a broader spectrum of disease.</p> <p><b>New clinical data</b></p> <p>"We're seeing new manifestations of illness," Rosamund Lewis, WHO's technical lead for monkeypox, said in a question-and-answer video on Tuesday. Those new manifestations include conditions "that</p>

	<p>can be extremely painful and need medical care, such as secondary infections or such as inflammation or swelling of the rectum," she said.</p> <p>Lewis went on to note the reports of deaths, including encephalitis cases. "This is very tragic; it is not totally surprising," she said. The WHO will release more information on the cases as it comes in from countries, she said.</p> <p>More illness data and possibly deaths may come in as the outbreak continues to grow. Some countries, such as Germany and the UK, are seeing plateaus or possibly slow declines. But others, such as the US, Peru, and Brazil, are still seeing dramatic rises.</p> <p>In the US, the case total is now up to <a href="#">6,326</a>, the largest tally in the world, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The US confirmed its first case on May 18 and has added more than 2,500 cases in the past week or so. Cases have now been reported in every state, except for Wyoming and Montana. So far, no deaths have been reported.</p> <p>On Monday, the governors of California and Illinois declared states of emergency over the outbreak. New York's governor declared a statewide emergency Friday. The declarations are intended to mobilize resources and efforts to combat the public health threat, which is largely spreading among men who have sex with men. It's unclear if federal officials will declare a public health emergency over the outbreak. But on Tuesday, the White House announced that President Biden had named <a href="#">two long-time FEMA employees</a> to lead the country's response.</p> <p>WHO declared <a href="#">the multinational monkeypox outbreak a public health emergency of international concern</a> (PHEIC) on July 23. It is the agency's highest level of alert.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 China conveys drumbeat anger to US</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/02/world/pelosi-taiwan?action=click&amp;pgtype=Article&amp;module=&amp;state=default&amp;region=footer&amp;context=breakout_link_back_to_briefing#chinese-statements-convey-a-drumbeat-of-anger-at-the-united-states">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/02/world/pelosi-taiwan?action=click&amp;pgtype=Article&amp;module=&amp;state=default&amp;region=footer&amp;context=breakout_link_back_to_briefing#chinese-statements-convey-a-drumbeat-of-anger-at-the-united-states</a>
GIST	<p>As Beijing announced an intimidating array of military exercises around Taiwan, the Chinese government also unleashed a volley of statements making clear that its grievances with the United States go beyond Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to the island.</p> <p>In a coordinated chorus, China's <a href="#">Ministry of Foreign Affairs</a>, its <a href="#">Ministry of National Defense</a>, the Chinese Communist Party <a href="#">office for Taiwan affairs</a> and the <a href="#">Chinese legislature</a> issued statements calling Ms. Pelosi's visit a violation of longstanding American commitments to a "one China" policy that downgraded official links with Taiwan. Biden administration officials have said her visit marked no change in its policies.</p> <p>But the Chinese denunciations ranged well beyond the House speaker's visit.</p> <p>They portrayed Ms. Pelosi's trip as part of a systematic effort by the United States to "use Taiwan to contain China" and sabotage Beijing's efforts at unification with the island. They also cited U.S. arms sales and its support for the island's ability to fight an "asymmetrical" war, congressional actions supporting Taiwan and efforts to give Taiwan a footing in some international forums.</p> <p>"The United States has become the 'biggest wrecker' of peace in the Taiwan Strait and of regional stability," China's foreign minister said in a <a href="#">statement issued Wednesday</a> about Ms. Pelosi's visit. "The United States must have no illusions that it can stymie the great cause of China's unification."</p> <p>To stabilize relations, his and other official comments seemed to suggest, the Biden administration would need to do more than just try to distance itself from the Pelosi visit.</p>

	<p>“The United States government must shoulder responsibility,” a Chinese deputy foreign minister, Xie Feng, said when he called in the American ambassador in Beijing, Nicholas Burns, to protest the visit, <a href="#">according to Xinhua</a>, China’s main news agency. “For some time, the United States has said one thing and done another, constantly twisting, distorting, voiding and hollowing out the one-China principle.”</p> <p>The Chinese leadership reinforced that warning in front-page editorials <a href="#">published Wednesday in the People’s Daily</a> — the Communist Party’s main newspaper — and the Liberation Army Daily, the military’s main newspaper. China’s military exercises around Taiwan, <a href="#">the Liberation Army Daily said</a>, were “a stern deterrent aimed at the United States’ major escalation of negative actions on the Taiwan issue.”</p> <p>The statements from Senior Col. Wu Qian, a spokesman for China’s defense ministry, and from the <a href="#">People’s Liberation Army’s Eastern Command</a>, which covers Taiwan, suggested that Ms. Pelosi’s act was a crisis in the making.</p> <p>“China has multiple times spelled out the grave consequences of visiting Taiwan,” Colonel Wu said. “But Pelosi knowingly violated this and maliciously provoked and created a crisis.”</p> <p>The Chinese word used in the official statements for “visit” — cuanfang — connotes a sneaky or illicit encounter, not an aboveboard meeting.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Fear of backlash against Asian Americans</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/02/world/pelosi-taiwan?action=click&amp;pgtype=Article&amp;module=&amp;state=default&amp;region=footer&amp;context=breakout">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/02/world/pelosi-taiwan?action=click&amp;pgtype=Article&amp;module=&amp;state=default&amp;region=footer&amp;context=breakout</a> <a href="#">link back to briefing#in-san-franciscos-chinatown-some-fear-a-backlash-against-asian-americans</a>
GIST	<p>SAN FRANCISCO — Shopkeepers, landlords and restaurant workers in America’s oldest and largest Chinatown reacted with a mixture of anger and apprehension on Tuesday to Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s Taiwan visit.</p> <p>The Covid pandemic brought the hillside neighborhood in San Francisco to its knees, and only in recent months has the area seen something of a rebound. Now, some say they fear that the trip by Ms. Pelosi, their representative in Congress, could inflame anti-Chinese sentiment and trigger attacks on Asian Americans.</p> <p>“At this moment we don’t want to create any more negative feelings against the Chinese,” said Melvin Lee, a property developer and community leader. “That’s the main concern.”</p> <p><a href="#">A spate of stabbings, robberies and fatal attacks against Asian Americans in the city</a> over the past two years created waves of fear that still grip the community. Grocery stores, restaurants and shops that were once open late into the night now close at 5 or 6 p.m. Social gatherings that once convened in the evenings now take place in the afternoons.</p> <p>“People are scared to be out,” said Henry Chen, owner of AA Bakery, which has locations around the city. One of his shops on the edge of Chinatown stayed open until 11 p.m. before the pandemic. It now closes at 5.</p> <p>“I don’t want my employees to be out too late,” Mr. Chen said. “They take the bus home and you never know what could happen.”</p> <p>Stephen Chan, the owner of a jewelry store in Chinatown that specializes in jade, said he had been robbed 10 times over the past three years, usually by someone who came into the store and grabbed low-value items. He called Ms. Pelosi’s trip to Taiwan “pointless” and compared it to President Trump’s description of the coronavirus as the <a href="#">Chinese virus</a>. In both cases, he said, “Americans were pouring oil over the fire.”</p>



	<p>Across Chinatown on Tuesday, Chinese flags fluttered above the rooftops, often alongside the American flag. Only a few buildings flew Taiwan's flag, and the headquarters of the main Taiwanese association in Chinatown, the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Memorial Hall, was closed.</p> <p>Across the street at the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, a politically powerful umbrella organization of Chinese organizations in the city, Wing Ho Lau, the executive secretary, said he was not ready to draw a link between Ms. Pelosi's visit and the prospect of further violence against Asian Americans in San Francisco. But he said there was little doubt where local sympathies lay on the question of Ms. Pelosi's trip.</p> <p>"In the 1970s it was 2 percent support for China and 98 percent for Taiwan," he said. "Now it's the other way around."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/03 Day 161 of the Russia invasion</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/03/russia-ukraine-war-what-we-know-on-day-161-of-the-invasion">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/03/russia-ukraine-war-what-we-know-on-day-161-of-the-invasion</a>
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A group of Russian soldiers have accused their commanders of <b>jailing them in eastern Ukraine for refusing to take part in the war</b>. About 140 soldiers were detained and four have filed complaints with an investigative committee, said Maxim Grebenyuk, head of Moscow-based group Military Ombudsman.</li> <li>• Russia has accused the US of being "directly involved" in the war by <b>supplying targeting information</b> for Ukraine's long-range missile strikes. Vadym Skibitsky, Ukraine's acting deputy head of military intelligence, denied US officials were providing direct targeting information but acknowledged there was consultation.</li> <li>• The US has <b>imposed sanctions on Vladimir Putin's purported lover</b>. Alina Kabaeva, 39, landed on the <a href="#">latest update</a> to the Office of Foreign Assets Control's specially designated nationals list – freezing any of her assets in the US and generally prohibiting Americans from dealing with her.</li> <li>• Russia's supreme court has <b>designated the Azov regiment</b> – a former volunteer battalion that was incorporated into Ukraine's army – a "terrorist" organisation, allowing for lengthy jail terms for its members.</li> <li>• The <b>first grain carrying ship</b> to export food from Ukraine under an export deal brokered by Turkey and the UN has reached Turkey's Bosphorous entrance from the Black Sea. It is carrying 26,527 tonnes of corn destined for Lebanon, and is the first of 27 ships that officials hope will ease the global food crisis.</li> <li>• The G7 is threatening to further deprive Russia of revenue by <b>blocking services that enable the transportation of its oil globally</b> if it doesn't heed the proposed oil price cap. Russia has already stated it will not obey the cap and will ship to nations that don't support the price ceiling.</li> <li>• Russia has carried out <b>deadly strikes against Ukrainians in the eastern Kharkiv and Mykolaiv regions</b>, according to Reuters, which said it was yet to verify the battle reports.</li> <li>• More than 10 million people have <b>fled across Ukraine's border</b> since Russia invaded, according to the UN Refugee Agency.</li> </ul>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Russia: US 'directly involved' in war</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/02/russia-claims-us-directly-involved-in-ukraine-war">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/02/russia-claims-us-directly-involved-in-ukraine-war</a>
GIST	<p>The role of American intelligence in the war in <a href="#">Ukraine</a> has been put under scrutiny after Russia accused the White House of supplying targeting information used by Kyiv to conduct long-range missile strikes.</p> <p>Russia's defence ministry claimed Washington was "directly involved" in the war, and had passed on intelligence that had led to the "mass deaths of civilians". The US was responsible for rocket attacks by Kyiv on populated areas in the eastern Donbas and in other regions, it said.</p>

“All this undeniably proves that Washington, contrary to White House and Pentagon claims, is directly involved in the conflict in Ukraine,” the ministry said in a statement.

The Biden administration has so far given more than \$8bn (£6.55bn) in security assistance to Ukraine since Russia’s February invasion, including an additional \$550m tranche unveiled on Monday. But it [strongly denies](#) it is a participant in the conflict or is at war with Russia.

The Kremlin’s comments came after [an interview given to the Telegraph](#) on Monday by Vadym Skibitsky, Ukraine’s acting deputy head of military intelligence. Skibitsky said the US-made [long-range HIMARS artillery systems](#) had been extremely effective in wiping out Russian fuel and ammunition dumps.

He said excellent satellite imagery and real-time information had helped. He denied US officials were providing direct targeting information. But he acknowledged there was consultation between US and Ukrainian intelligence officials before strikes, so Washington could vet and if necessary veto intended targets.

Russia’s foreign ministry spokesperson, Maria Zakharova, leaped on the remarks. She told the RIA Novosti news agency: “No other confirmation of the direct involvement of the United States in the hostilities on the territory of Ukraine is required.

“The supply of weapons is accompanied not only by instructions on its use, but in this case they perform the function of gunners in their purest form.”

The US has given Ukraine 16 HIMARS systems so far. Four more arrived this week. Ukraine’s president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, has credited them with slowing Russia’s advances in the east and south and inflicting significant damage on enemy operations.

Superior US-supplied artillery is likely to play a key role in a possible [Ukrainian counter-offensive to recapture the southern city of Kherson](#), which the Russians took in the first days of the invasion. In recent days Russia has transferred troops and equipment to the southern front to shore up its defences.

Moscow claims a HIMARS strike killed 53 Ukrainian prisoners of war last week at a Russian-operated prison near Olenivka, in the Donetsk region. Another 73 were injured. Kyiv says the Russians murdered the prisoners from the Azov regiment, who were captured in May in Mariupol.

On Tuesday, the regiment called on the US state department to recognise Russia as a “terrorist state”.

“Russia has been proving this status with its daily actions for many years. Its army and special services commit war crimes every day,” it said, claiming its fighters were victims of a Moscow “public execution”.

On Monday the Institute for the Study of War published [a report](#) that concluded Russian forces were behind the prison explosion. It said satellite imagery strongly suggested a “precision strike or an internally planted incendiary or explosive” caused the blast.

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HEADLINE	08/02 Equifax glitch: sent inaccurate credit scores
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/equifax-sent-lenders-inaccurate-credit-scores-on-millions-of-consumers-11659467483?mod=hp_lead_pos3">https://www.wsj.com/articles/equifax-sent-lenders-inaccurate-credit-scores-on-millions-of-consumers-11659467483?mod=hp_lead_pos3</a>
GIST	<a href="#">Equifax</a> Inc. provided inaccurate credit scores on millions of U.S. consumers seeking loans during a three-week period earlier this year, according to bank executives and others familiar with the errors.  Equifax sent the erroneous scores on people applying for auto loans, mortgages and credit cards to banks and nonbank lenders big and small—including <a href="#">JPMorgan Chase &amp; Co.</a> , <a href="#">Wells Fargo &amp; Co.</a> and <a href="#">Ally Financial</a> Inc., the people said. The scores were sometimes off by 20 points or more in either

direction, the people said, enough to alter the interest rates consumers were offered or to result in their applications being rejected altogether.

The inaccurate scores were sent from mid March through early April, the people said. The company began disclosing the errors to lenders in May, they said.

Equifax said it has since fixed the error, which the company described as a “technology coding issue.” The glitch didn’t alter the information in consumers’ credit reports, the company said.

“We have determined that there was no shift in the vast majority of scores during the three-week timeframe of the issue,” Sid Singh, president of Equifax’s U.S. Information Solutions, said in a statement. “For those consumers that did experience a score shift, initial analysis indicates that only a small number of them may have received a different credit decision.”

Equifax maintains credit reports on more than 200 million U.S. consumers and sells them to lenders. The information in these files—including whether consumers are applying for debt, the types of accounts they have and whether they have a history of paying on time—determines consumers’ credit scores. Credit scores are among a number of factors lenders consider when making loan decisions.

The glitch is another setback for Equifax, which fell victim to a hack in 2017 that exposed the sensitive personal information of [nearly 150 million Americans](#).

Trade publication National Mortgage Professional [reported on the glitch](#) in late May, saying Equifax had notified lenders of erroneous scores during the period in question.

Mark Begor, Equifax’s chief executive, publicly acknowledged the flub at a June investor conference, calling it a coding issue that affected “legacy applications that resulted in some scores going out that had incorrect data.” He said the company had fixed the problem and takes issues with its data quality seriously.

“The impact is going to be quite small,” Mr. Begor said, “not something that’s meaningful to Equifax.”

The glitch, however, affected many lenders across multiple consumer loan products, not just mortgages, according to people familiar with the matter.

The percentage of incorrect scores provided to lenders varied, the people said. At one big bank, for example, 18% of applicants during the three-week period had incorrect scores, with an average swing of 8 points, one of the people said.

Equifax told one large auto lender that about 10% of applicants during the three-week period had inaccurate scores, according to a person familiar with the matter. Of those, several thousand saw a change of 25 points or more on their credit score, the person said. In a small number of cases, applicants went from having no credit score at all to a score in the 700s—or vice versa, the person said. The most widely used credit scores range between 300 to 850; the higher the credit score, the more likely an applicant will get approved and at a lower interest rate.

Lenders are asking Equifax for more information and are trying to figure out what to do for applicants who were denied credit or offered a higher interest rate than they deserved, the people said. They are considering repricing loans and giving rejected applicants an opportunity to reapply, the people said, a task complicated by recent interest-rate increases.

Equifax has been working closely with lenders and providing them with updated scores, Mr. Singh said in the statement. “We do not take this issue lightly,” he said.

The glitch could land the Atlanta-based Equifax in more hot water with its regulator, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. [Under its director](#), Rohit Chopra, the agency is investigating how the three

main credit-reporting companies—Equifax, [Experian](#) PLC and [TransUnion](#)—handle consumer disputes, The Wall Street Journal [previously reported](#).

Mortgage lenders sought about 2.5 million credit scores in the period in question, according to one industry estimate. But because they typically view credit scores from each of the three credit-reporting companies, the glitch's effects on mortgages may have been blunted, some industry officials said.

[Fannie Mae](#) and [Freddie Mac](#), which guarantee about half of the U.S. mortgage market, likely purchased only a relatively small number of loans at inaccurate prices due to erroneous credit scores, one of the people said. Mortgage lenders may owe the government-controlled companies additional money if borrowers received higher credit scores than they should have and their loans are deemed riskier than initially thought, according to industry officials. In some cases, Fannie and Freddie could owe lenders refunds if the scores were unduly low.

A spokesman said the Federal Housing Finance Agency, which oversees Fannie and Freddie, is still working with the mortgage giants to assess the scope of the loans affected by the glitch.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Russia shells Ukraine apartment buildings</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/russia-shells-apartment-buildings-in-southern-ukraine-11659437030">https://www.wsj.com/articles/russia-shells-apartment-buildings-in-southern-ukraine-11659437030</a>
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine—Russian shells struck Ukrainian-held territory in the country's south Tuesday morning, according to local officials, as both sides shift their attention toward a <a href="#">looming fight for the area</a>.</p> <p>In the southern city of Mykolaiv, where early-morning shelling has become routine in recent weeks, rockets destroyed a student dormitory and damaged several apartment buildings and other civilian infrastructure, the city's mayor wrote on Telegram.</p> <p>In the Dnipropetrovsk region, northeast of Mykolaiv, several areas came under fire overnight, according to its governor, including the Synelnykovskiy district, away from the front lines.</p> <p>"A night of anxiety and shelling," Valentyn Reznichenko, governor of the Dnipropetrovsk region, wrote on Telegram. "The enemy hit Synelnykovskiy with antiaircraft fire."</p> <p>Russian officials have repeatedly said they don't target civilian areas.</p> <p>The Biden administration, meanwhile, imposed sanctions Tuesday on more Russian elites including Alina Kabaeva, the woman the U.S. government believes to be Russian President <a href="#">Vladimir Putin</a>'s <a href="#">girlfriend and the mother of at least three of his children</a>. The European Union and U.K. have already imposed sanctions on Ms. Kabaeva, a former member of the State Duma, or lower house of parliament, and current head of the National Media Group.</p> <p>"The Treasury Department will use every tool at our disposal to make sure that Russian elites and the Kremlin's enablers are held accountable for their complicity in a war that has cost countless lives," Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said.</p> <p>Ukrainian and Russian forces have been shifting their focus to the south in recent weeks, as Ukraine prepares for what officials said would be a major counteroffensive to retake areas that it lost in the early days of the war.</p> <p>Moscow has been moving troops out of the Donetsk region, in the east, and deploying them to defend territory in the south, according to Ukrainian and British officials.</p> <p>At the same time, Ukraine has used long-range artillery and rocket systems, including <a href="#">U.S.-supplied M142 Himars</a>, to halt Russia's advances in the east, as well as to damage Russian supply lines in the south.</p>

	<p>On Monday, the Biden administration authorized another \$550 million in U.S. military aid for Ukraine, bringing Washington's security assistance for Kyiv to more than \$8 billion since Russia's invasion. Earlier in the day, Ukraine's defense minister said four additional HIMARS had arrived in the country.</p> <p>"The word 'HIMARS' has become almost synonymous with the word 'justice' for our country, and the Ukrainian defense forces will do everything to ensure that the occupiers experience more and more painful losses every week thanks to these very effective systems," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in his nightly address Tuesday.</p> <p>Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said Tuesday that "uncontrolled deliveries" of Western weapons to Ukraine seriously threatened the security of the region.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Labor market shows signs of cooling</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/job-openings-hiring-economy-june-2022-11659388973?mod=hp_listb_pos3">https://www.wsj.com/articles/job-openings-hiring-economy-june-2022-11659388973?mod=hp_listb_pos3</a>
GIST	<p>U.S. job openings fell in June to their lowest level in nine months and hiring slowed, in new signs of a cooling labor market.</p> <p>The Labor Department on Tuesday said there were a seasonally adjusted <a href="#">10.7 million job openings in June</a>, down from 11.3 million in May. That was the lowest level since September.</p> <p>The number of times workers quit their jobs edged down to 4.2 million from the prior month's 4.3 million, extending a stretch of unusually high job turnover that started in early 2021. Layoffs and discharges fell to 1.3 million in June from 1.4 million the prior month. Hiring slowed slightly to 6.4 million, down from 6.5 million in May.</p> <p>"Job openings have slowed down," said Nick Bunker, an economist at jobs site Indeed. "There's still lots of opportunities for job seekers right now. We're just not seeing any further pickup or increase in those opportunities."</p> <p>Despite the decline, total job openings remained well above the number of people unemployed but looking for work, which the Labor Department put at 5.9 million in June.</p> <p>The labor market is showing other signs of slowing. <a href="#">Hiring eased in June</a> from higher totals earlier in the year, and economists estimate employers pulled back further on filling positions in July. The Labor Department will release unemployment figures Friday at 8:30 a.m. ET. Initial jobless claims, a proxy for layoffs, in July <a href="#">reached their highest level</a> since November, and are expected to have climbed slightly last week.</p> <p>As the labor market weakens, workers are likely to hold onto their jobs out of fear of recession and layoffs, said Dante DeAntonio, economist at Moody's Analytics.</p> <p>The U.S. economy <a href="#">shrank in the first two quarters</a> of the year, the Commerce Department said last week. A recession is commonly defined as two consecutive quarters of negative gross domestic product, but Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell has said that <a href="#">the U.S. isn't in a recession</a>.</p> <p>Mr. Powell pointed to the labor market as a source of U.S. strength. "2.7 million people hired in the first half of the year, it doesn't make sense that the economy would be in recession," he said last week after the Fed's most recent policy meeting.</p> <p>Worker pay and benefits <a href="#">have risen fast</a> this year, reflecting the imbalance of jobs and available workers. Wages and benefits increased 5.1% in the second quarter compared with the same period a year ago, the Labor Department said Friday. That was the fastest rate of increase on record dating back to 2001.</p>

“Competition for workers remains fierce as employers have to keep bidding up wages for new hires,” Mr. Bunker said. “These red-hot wage-growth statistics may fade in the near term, but there’s a long way for them to drop.”

Nicole Marquis, chief executive of plant-based restaurant HipCityVeg, said the Philadelphia-based company is always hiring.

“At the end of 2021, HipCityVeg—which spans 10 locations in Pennsylvania, New York and Washington, D.C.—hired a full-time recruiter who worked for the company for less than six months when the business was opening new locations. But now there isn’t a need for the position,” Ms. Marquis said.

HipCityVeg has about 20 to 30 open positions, and is currently looking to fill cashier and cooking roles, among others. “We’re definitely in expansion,” she said. “We’re hiring more than ever.”

Headspace Health, a digital-health company with more than 1,000 employees, expects to hire at least 150 employees by the end of the year.

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit in early 2020, there was a “skyrocketing mental health need,” said Russell Glass, the company’s CEO. “We’re in a business that’s counter cyclical,” he said.

Mr. Glass said the company came to the conclusion that it didn’t make sense to do layoffs. “We’re going to continue to invest in hiring because we see continued massive need. We think the demand, if anything, is going to go up during a period like this.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/03 Pelosi trip undermine US efforts Asia allies?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/03/world/asia/taiwan-pelosi-visit-allies.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/03/world/asia/taiwan-pelosi-visit-allies.html</a>
GIST	<p>The Biden administration has spent months building an economic and diplomatic strategy in Asia to counter China, shoring up its alliances and assuring friendly countries that the United States is in the region for the long haul.</p> <p>The president has sent top military officials to seal new partnerships, and <a href="#">paid attention to a tiny nation</a> in the Pacific, the Solomon Islands. He has launched a plan <a href="#">to arm Australia</a> with nuclear-powered submarines and initiated a regional economic pact. He visited South Korea and Japan in May, and for the first time invited the two countries to a <a href="#">NATO meeting</a>, to reinforce that Asia wasn’t forgotten as war raged in Ukraine.</p> <p>The visit to Taiwan by Speaker Nancy Pelosi now threatens to undermine the push by the White House, leaving allies to wonder what damage had been done to the president’s united front in Asia.</p> <p>The fear is that the trip, which will also include stops this week in South Korea and Japan, is an unnecessary provocation that distracts from the allies’ efforts to counter China’s military might and economic clout.</p> <p>While U.S. allies have largely remained mum on the visit so far, there’s a sense among America’s friends that they were left out in the cold to watch as China threatened the United States and Taiwan, the self-governed island that China claims as its own.</p> <p>The handling of Ms. Pelosi’s visit was worrisome because, intentionally or not, it showed China’s power and diminished the role of the allies, said Seong-Hyon Lee, a South Korean fellow at the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies at Harvard University.</p> <p>“The very fact that China’s potential response becomes a heated debate in Washington reveals China’s rise in status,” Mr. Lee said. “Washington’s hesitance has been already widely read in the region. This is a very poor signaling diplomacy coming from Washington to its allies and partners in the region.”</p>



Despite its short-term economic issues, Beijing has invested deeply, financially and diplomatically, in long-term plans to dominate the region.

China keeps telling its Asian neighbors that it is their natural partner by geographic location and cultural commonality. It is trying to persuade them that the United States is a distant and declining power, with a broken political system, bound to lose its influence in Asia.

The Chinese Navy has steadily increased its patrols and military exercises in the South China Sea, sending more sophisticated ships. Its military aircraft have harassed warplanes of American allies in recent months. In May, Australia complained that a Chinese fighter jet dangerously intercepted one of its surveillance aircraft.

Given China's economic and military might, allies want consultation with Washington, something they didn't appear to get on Ms. Pelosi's foray to Taiwan.

The foreign minister of Australia, Penny Wong, suggested this on Wednesday when she called on all sides, not only China, to back off.

"All parties should consider how they best contribute to de-escalating the current tensions, and we all want peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait," Ms. Wong said.

Mr. Biden's assurances on Asia in recent months had been comforting to nations facing China's ire.

A favorite expression of that ire has been trade boycotts for what China considers bad behavior. Just hours after Ms. Pelosi's arrival in Taiwan, China imposed economic measures on the island in retaliation.

Over the past two years, China has banned Australia's exports of wine, lobsters and coal, after its government called for an international investigation into the origins of Covid-19, which first surfaced in China. The Chinese government still maintains economic sanctions on South Korea for allowing the United States in 2017 to deploy a missile defense system known as THAAD.

When the new South Korean leader, Yoon Suk-yeol, said recently that he might consider a second installment of the system, China threatened more sanctions.

The economic bans and China's growing authoritarianism have [hurt its standing](#) in South Korea, where a record high of 80 percent of the population now holds negative views of the country, according to a recent study conducted by the Pew Research Center.

"China ranks first among South Korea's most disliked countries," said a retired general, Shin Won-sik, who is now a member of the National Assembly. "Around a decade ago, South Koreans had similar opinions toward China as they did the U.S."

In response to the China threat, he said, South Korea and Japan, which have historically had frosty relations, have agreed for the first time to join with the United States to start trilateral military exercises.

Japan, one of the most enthusiastic supporters of Washington's China strategy, has increased coordination with the United States on Taiwan. The defense ministry in Japan has also moved troops, antiaircraft artillery and surface-to-ship missile defense batteries to the country's southern islands, some of which are close to Taiwan.

Public opinion in Japan has shifted decisively against China, and support for Taiwan has grown, presenting an opportunity for Washington to capitalize on closer relations between Japan and Taiwan. But Japan also wants to avoid any unnecessary new friction between the United States and China.

The trip was “totally not a strategic benefit for us,” said Ryo Sahashi, an associate professor at the University of Tokyo. “We strongly support Taiwan democracy and also we really appreciate U.S. efforts for Taiwan’s defense, including arms sales to Taiwan.”

“But this is totally different,” he added. “What we really want to see is a more quiet environment which really enables us, Japan and the United States, to enhance our security partnership with Taipei.”

Across the region, the United States has made strategic efforts to embrace the allies in a more cohesive coalition, with military and diplomatic underpinnings.

A year ago, Australia agreed to a landmark defense pact, known as AUKUS, with the United States and Britain, to acquire nuclear propulsion technology for the planned submarines.

In a visit last month to Australia, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Mark A. Milley, confirmed Washington’s policy of fortifying Australia with new weapons. “The Chinese military activity is noticeably and statistically more aggressive than in previous years,” Mr. Milley said during his visit.

Together with the United States, Australia is spending money and diplomatic capital to help counter growing Chinese influence in the Pacific islands, a strategically important area in the event of war with China.

It’s a complicated position to navigate. The economies of many of America’s allies in the region, including Japan, South Korea and Australia, depend heavily on China. About one-third of Australia’s exports go to China.

Despite bad diplomatic relations, Australia’s sales of iron ore, a main raw material for China’s industry, gained last year. Now, wine and coal exporters are trying to get their products back into the Chinese market.

There has been a flurry of high-level discussions to try to repair relations. The new Australian defense minister, Richard Marles, met with his Chinese counterpart, Wei Fenghe, in Singapore last month.

Ms. Wong met with Wang Yi, her Chinese counterpart, in Bali, ending a two-year diplomatic freeze. She has gone out of her way to say that China and Australia are not enemies.

As countries now brace for the fallout from Ms. Pelosi’s visit, the increased tensions between the two superpowers have ultimately raised questions about the authority of the American president.

“It doesn’t say much about Biden’s clout that he can’t prevail on the speaker from his own party,” said Alan Dupont, a former defense intelligence analyst for the Australian government, noting that the president had said the military did not think the visit was a good idea.

A previous speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich, visited Taiwan 25 years ago. But Mr. Gingrich was a Republican and President Bill Clinton was a Democrat, a political situation that made the trip more defensible. Mr. Gingrich visited China and met with its leader at the time, Jiang Zemin, before going to Taiwan, via Japan, an unthinkable schedule today.

China’s military was also far weaker back then, and was only beginning to modernize its forces, which now include a far stronger array of missiles and a vastly expanded navy.

Even in Australia, a democratic country with raucous politics, where people knew that Ms. Pelosi was a powerful figure, it was unfathomable that Mr. Biden did not persuade her to cancel, Mr. Dupont said.

“An unnecessary crisis,” he said. “An own goal, the U.S. put itself in this position.”

HEADLINE	08/03 Europe largest migration crisis since WWII
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/03/world/ukraine-russia-news-war#about-a-third-of-ukraines-population-has-been-forced-from-their-homes-by-russias-onslaught">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/03/world/ukraine-russia-news-war#about-a-third-of-ukraines-population-has-been-forced-from-their-homes-by-russias-onslaught</a>
GIST	<p>The merciless accounting that measures the losses from Russia's invasion now includes <a href="#">about 6.2 million Ukrainian refugees</a> elsewhere in Europe, according to the United Nations, and another <a href="#">6.3 million "internally displaced."</a></p> <p>That means that about 30 percent of the country's estimated prewar population of 41 million has been forced from their homes, amounting to by far the largest migration crisis in Europe since the aftermath of World War II.</p> <p>And that is hardly the full the toll. The country does not release public counts of military casualties, and civilian casualties in areas overrun by Russia are guesses, at best, but officials estimate tens of thousands of Ukrainians have been killed and many more wounded. Major cities and smaller towns have been leveled. Ukraine's Defense Ministry said Tuesday that at least 140,000 residential buildings had been destroyed or damaged, robbing 3.5 million people of their homes.</p> <p>And each day, the bloodshed, dislocation and devastation grow. Two civilians were killed and five others badly injured trying to flee Russian-held territory in the southern Kherson region on Monday, Ukrainian officials said. The administrator of the neighboring Kryvyi Rih region said Russian forces had fired on their red minibus at "point-blank range."</p> <p>In the east, the focus of recent Russian offensives, an emergency evacuation train carrying "women, children, elderly people, many people with reduced mobility" made its way on Tuesday morning to safer territory in the west, Iryna Vereshchuk, a deputy prime minister, said in a statement.</p> <p>President Volodymyr Zelensky has pleaded with some 200,000 civilians in the east to evacuate the already depopulated areas near the front lines, where Russian artillery has laid waste to whole towns. But many cannot leave — because of age, illness or Russian attacks — and others will not, including Russian sympathizers and the merely stubborn. Most already lack essential infrastructure such as power, heat and clean water.</p> <p>If they wait until cold weather sets in, there will be little the government in Kyiv can do for them, Ms. Vereshchuk said. By then, Russia may have resumed major offensive operations.</p> <p>A month after <a href="#">seizing full control of the Luhansk region</a>, the easternmost part of Ukraine, President Vladimir V. Putin's Russian forces are regrouping for an expected push to conquer what they do not already hold of the <a href="#">neighboring Donetsk region</a>. But the combat never fully lets up, and every day the Russians still pound targets around the country.</p> <p>The Kremlin insists that it strikes only military targets, a claim belied by images of ruined apartment blocks, houses, schools, farms, hospitals and shops.</p> <p>U.S. lawmakers have pressured the Biden administration to label Russia a state sponsor of terror, a designation that Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken has so far resisted. On Tuesday, Russia's foreign ministry warned that it could react to such a move by cutting off direct relations with Washington, along with taking unspecified other measures.</p> <p>"A logical result of this irresponsible step could be the breaking off of diplomatic relations, after which Washington runs the risk of crossing the point of no return with all the ensuing consequences," said Maria Zakharova, the ministry spokeswoman.</p> <p>Russia's Supreme Court ruled Tuesday that Ukraine's Azov Regiment, a group with far-right roots whose members made a <a href="#">last stand in Mariupol</a>, was a terrorist organization. That could clear the way for Russia to criminally charge captured Azov soldiers with terrorism, rather than treating them as prisoners of war.</p>

	Last Friday, an explosion at a prison in the Donetsk region <a href="#">killed more than 50 of the Azovstal fighters</a> taken prisoner by Russians. Each side has blamed the other for the explosion.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/03 New round of US sanctions on Russians</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/03/world/ukraine-russia-news-war#the-biden-administration-imposes-new-sanctions-on-dozens-of-russian-entities">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/03/world/ukraine-russia-news-war#the-biden-administration-imposes-new-sanctions-on-dozens-of-russian-entities</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — The State Department on Tuesday announced a major new round of sanctions on dozens of Russian companies and individuals to further punish Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine, including oligarchs close to President Vladimir V. Putin and technology institutions with ties to Russia’s military.</p> <p>“As Ukrainians continue to valiantly defend their homeland in the face of President Putin’s brutal war, Russia’s elite are running massive revenue-generating companies and funding their own opulent lifestyles outside of Russia,” Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken said <a href="#">in a statement announcing the measures</a>.</p> <p>Many of the new targets on the new State Department list, or on a list announced by the Treasury Department on Tuesday, are already under sanctions imposed by the European Union and Britain. One is Alina Kabaeva, a former Olympic gymnast and member of the Russian Duma long believed to be Mr. Putin’s romantic partner.</p> <p>The move blocks Ms. Kabaeva from access to any assets in the United States or conducting transactions with Americans, and it denies her a visa to enter the United States.</p> <p>Other new targets include several billionaires: Dmitry Pumpyanskiy, the chairman of a Russian steel manufacturer; Andrey Melnichenko, the founder of fertilizer and coal companies; and Alexander Ponomarenko, a businessman who has “close ties to other oligarchs and the construction of Vladimir Putin’s seaside palace,” Mr. Blinken said.</p> <p>Also covered under the new measures are two dozen of Russia’s “most important defense-related research and development institutions, semiconductor producers, and advanced computing and electronics entities,” Mr. Blinken said. They include the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology, which has developed drones and other devices for Russia’s military.</p> <p>Mr. Putin has “repeatedly underscored his concerns about Russia’s access to microelectronics,” a State Department fact sheet said, asserting that the new measures would deal a fresh blow to Russia’s war machine.</p> <p>Daniel Fried, a former coordinator for U.S. sanctions policy in the Obama administration, called the new measures “a solid piece of work,” saying that the actions against high-tech entities were especially significant.</p> <p>He also said that experts on Russia and sanctions took note of the measures against Mr. Putin’s reputed romantic partner. “Many of us smiled when we saw Kabaeva,” he said.</p> <p>Mr. Fried urged the Biden administration to redouble its efforts to impose a more consequential global cap on the purchase price of Russian oil, which could deprive the Kremlin of billions of dollars in revenue. Leaders of the Group of Seven discussed such a cap at a meeting in Germany in late June, but have not announced a concrete plan.</p> <p>“They need to deliver — it’s been a month,” he said. “They need something effective to eat into Putin’s income. This package is good, but the need requires even more.”</p>

	<p>Also on the new U.S. list is the Joint Stock Company State Transportation Leasing Company, a state-owned enterprise that the State Department identified as Russia's largest transportation leasing company, and four of its subsidiaries.</p> <p>And the State Department will impose visa restrictions on another 893 Russian government officials, for hostile actions toward Ukraine, along with 31 foreign government officials who have supported Russia's claims to Ukrainian territory, Mr. Blinken said.</p> <p>Mr. Blinken said the United States was also imposing sanctions on four men and one organization for "illegitimately operating in Ukraine's territory in collaboration with Russia." One of the four is Kostyantyn Ivashchenko, whom U.S. officials called "the illegitimate mayor of Russia-controlled Mariupol."</p> <p>The organization singled out by American officials is the Salvation Committee for Peace and Order, which the State Department said was established in Ukraine's Kherson region to support Moscow's efforts to seize control there.</p> <p>Among the Treasury Departments sanction targets are three "Kremlin-connected elites." They include Andrey Guryev, "a known close associate" of Mr. Putin who owns <a href="#">Witanhurst, a 25-bedroom mansion and grounds</a> said to be the second-biggest residential property in London, after Buckingham Palace, the department said in a <a href="#">news release</a>.</p> <p>The Treasury Department also placed sanctions on Mr. Guryev's yacht, the Alfa Nero, which he reportedly purchased for \$120 million in 2014. The department said the Alfa Nero had reportedly shut off its location-tracking system.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/03 Ukraine, Russia sailors tested by war</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/03/world/ukraine-russia-news-war">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/03/world/ukraine-russia-news-war</a>
GIST	<p>Commercial vessels have become some of the few places where Russians and Ukrainians, who make up 15 percent of the world's 1.9 million sailors, still live side by side on routes around the world while their countries are at war. Some ships have become rare havens of understanding and forgiveness. On other ships, the mood has become tense and at times unbearable, upending the maritime tradition of sailors viewing each other as teammates, no matter their backgrounds.</p> <p>With the global maritime industry already short of commercial sailors, and especially dependent on sailors from Russia and Ukraine, who tend to be highly skilled, some companies have switched out sailors to cool tension on board.</p> <p>A.P. Moller-Maersk, one of the world's largest shipping companies, said in a statement that having Russian and Ukrainians crew members on the same ship could be challenging. "As a precautionary measure, we have decided not to have seafarers from Ukraine and Russia aboard the same vessel," the company said, adding that this policy had come into effect at the beginning of the invasion in February.</p> <p>Amid the difficult moments, on some ships, the close contact between Russians and Ukrainians has led to unexpected compassion.</p> <p>Roman Zelenskyi, 24, a sailor from Odesa, Ukraine, said that after he and the other Ukrainians showed the Russians photos of the damage in the Ukrainian cities of Kharkiv and Mariupol, the four Russians on his ship were shocked and ashamed. "This is people like me working on a vessel," he said. "We live in peace."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Russia regroupes for new offensive</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/02/world/europe/ukraine-east-evacuation.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/02/world/europe/ukraine-east-evacuation.html</a>

## GIST

At least 140,000 residential buildings in Ukraine destroyed or damaged. More than 3.5 million people left homeless. More than 12 million displaced. New tallies were added Tuesday to the merciless accounting that measures the losses from Russia's invasion.

Each day, the bloodshed, dislocation and devastation grow. Two civilians were killed and five others badly injured trying to flee Russian-held territory in the southern Kherson region, Ukrainian officials said Tuesday. The administrator of the neighboring Kryvyi Rih region said Russian forces had fired on their red minibus at "point-blank range."

In the east, the focus of recent Russian offensives, an emergency evacuation train carrying "women, children, elderly people, many people with reduced mobility" made its way on Tuesday morning to safer territory in the west, Iryna Vereshchuk, a deputy prime minister, said in a statement.

President Volodymyr Zelensky has pleaded with some 200,000 civilians in the east to evacuate the already depopulated areas near the front lines, where Russian artillery has laid waste to whole towns. Those who remain are disproportionately the old, the infirm, the Russian sympathizers or the merely stubborn. Most already lack essential infrastructure such as power, heat and clean water.

If they wait until cold weather sets in this fall, Ms. Vereshchuk said — by which time Russia may have resumed major offensive operations — there will be little the government in Kyiv can do for them.

A month after seizing full control of the Luhansk region, the easternmost part of Ukraine, President Vladimir V. Putin's Russian forces are regrouping for an expected push to conquer what they do not already hold of the neighboring Donetsk region. But the combat never fully lets up, and every day the Russians still pound targets around the country.

The Ukrainian military said on Tuesday that it had repelled multiple attempts by the Russians to advance on the city of Bakhmut, in the Donetsk region. In the south, Ukrainian forces have driven the Russians back and are expected to make a major push to retake the strategic city of Kherson.

"The power of the democratic world is well felt on the battlefield in Ukraine this week," Mr. Zelensky said in his overnight address to the nation.

But Ukraine's determination to defend itself has come at a frightful cost that numbers can only begin to describe. The country does not release public counts of military casualties, and civilian casualties in areas overrun by Russia are guesses, at best, but tens of thousands of Ukrainians are estimated to have been killed, with many more wounded.

The Kremlin insists that it strikes only military targets, a claim belied by images of ruined apartment blocks, houses, schools, farms, hospitals and shops. Ukraine's defense ministry said Tuesday that at least 140,000 residential buildings had been destroyed or damaged, leaving more than 3.5 million people homeless.

The U.N. refugee agency said the number of people who have left Ukraine since Feb. 24 had topped 10 million, though many of those later returned. The United Nations now counts [about 6.2 million Ukrainians as refugees](#) who have moved elsewhere in Europe during the war, and 6.3 million as "internally displaced," people who have fled the fighting but remain within Ukraine — by far the largest migration crisis in Europe since the aftermath of World War II.

That means at least 30 percent of the country's estimated prewar population of 41 million has been forced from their homes.

The U.S. State Department on Tuesday announced a major new round of sanctions, including economic and travel restrictions, targeting Russian companies, institutions and individuals with ties to the Kremlin or its war effort. The list includes several billionaire business magnates, as well as Alina Kabaeva, a former



	<p>Olympic gymnast and member of the Russian Duma who is widely described as Mr. Putin’s romantic partner.</p> <p>In the United States, lawmakers have pressured the Biden administration to label Russia a state sponsor of terror, a designation that Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken has so far resisted. On Tuesday, Russia’s foreign ministry warned that it could react to such a move by cutting off direct relations with Washington, along with taking unspecified other measures.</p> <p>“A logical result of this irresponsible step could be the breaking off of diplomatic relations, after which Washington runs the risk of crossing the point of no return with all the ensuing consequences,” said Maria Zakharova, the ministry spokeswoman.</p> <p>Russia’s Supreme Court ruled Tuesday that Ukraine’s Azov regiment, a group with far-right roots, is a terrorist organization, which could clear the way to captured soldiers being criminally charged with terrorism rather than being treated as prisoners of war. Many of the troops who made a <a href="#">last stand in Mariupol</a>, tying down Russian forces and living for nearly three months in bunkers beneath the sprawling Azovstal steel plant complex before surrendering, were from that regiment.</p> <p>Last Friday, an explosion at a prison in the Donetsk region <a href="#">killed more than 50 of the Azovstal fighters</a> taken prisoner by Russians. Each side has blamed the other for the explosion.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Calif. wildfire claims 2 more lives; 4 total</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/02/us/california-fire-mckinney-deaths.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/02/us/california-fire-mckinney-deaths.html</a>
GIST	<p>Two more people have died in a fast-moving wildfire that has torn through more than 56,000 acres of dry timber, grass and brush in Northern California since Friday, bringing the total of those killed in the blaze to four.</p> <p>The blaze, named the McKinney fire, began in the Klamath National Forest in Siskiyou County, Calif., about 14 miles south of the Oregon state line, the authorities said, and has since grown to become <a href="#">the state’s largest wildfire</a> this year.</p> <p>It exploded in size over the weekend, prompting evacuation orders for thousands of people in nearby rural communities and leading Gov. Gavin Newsom of California to <a href="#">declare</a> a state of emergency for Siskiyou County.</p> <p>On Tuesday, the Siskiyou County Sheriff’s Office <a href="#">said that two people had been found dead</a> at separate homes in the Klamath River area along State Route 96. The grim discoveries follow the deaths of two others, <a href="#">found Sunday</a> in a vehicle in a driveway, west of the Klamath River.</p> <p>Lower temperatures and an increase in humidity, including some rain on Monday, enabled firefighters to build containment lines with hand crews and bulldozers, authorities said. The combination of moisture, thunderstorms and the resulting high wind speeds, however, were creating “an unstable atmosphere which may make firefighting conditions much more hazardous,” <a href="#">they said in a report on the fire’s progress on Tuesday</a>.</p> <p>Conditions had begun to shift on Tuesday afternoon, revealing clear skies over the fire and prompting a red flag warning, Mike Lindbery, a spokesman with the United States Forest Service, said by phone.</p> <p>“We’ve had a couple of days to get in there and do some pretty good work, but we’re keeping an eye on the conditions today because they may force us off the hill.”</p> <p>Mr. Lindbery said that the region where the fire was burning was not only “very combustible” but also extremely difficult to access. “Getting out of those areas can be very difficult; getting firefighters into that area can be very difficult,” he said.</p>

	<p>Brian Nieuwenhuis, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Medford, Ore., said there was also a risk that too much rain could cause debris flow or mudslides, posing a danger to firefighters. Though conditions had settled somewhat, he added, “fire activity should continue throughout the week.”</p> <p>The fire, which remained zero-percent contained on Tuesday, is one of 60 large wildfires and <a href="#">fire complexes</a> that have burned more than 1.6 million acres across the United States so far this year, according to <a href="#">the National Interagency Fire Center</a>. In Siskiyou County, the China 2 and Alex fires, which are known together with surrounding lightning fires as the Yeti Complex, have burned more than 2,400 acres, authorities said.</p> <p>The McKinney fire comes at a precarious moment for the state, which, along with the Pacific Northwest, faced <a href="#">abnormally high temperatures</a> last week as a heat wave blanketed the region.</p> <p>Days of scorching temperatures and drought conditions have contributed to the intensity of fires by making vegetation drier and more likely to ignite. Analyses have shown that human-caused climate change <a href="#">has increased the likelihood of such extreme heat waves</a>.</p> <p>Siskiyou County is in extreme drought, <a href="#">according to the U.S. Drought Monitor</a>. Drought stress can kill trees, Mr. Nieuwenhuis, the meteorologist, said.</p> <p>“You kill a tree,” he added, “and it just becomes a big piece of firewood.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Could China invade Taiwan?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/02/world/asia/china-invade-taiwan.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/02/world/asia/china-invade-taiwan.html</a>
GIST	<p>After China <a href="#">announced military exercises</a> in six sea zones close to Taiwan, the island’s defense ministry <a href="#">said it had no doubt</a> what message Beijing wanted to send: “that they seek a cross-strait resolution by force instead of peaceful means.”</p> <p>But could China take Taiwan by force if it wanted to?</p> <p>Under China’s leader, Xi Jinping, the People’s Liberation Army has upgraded to the point where a campaign to seize Taiwan seems increasingly plausible. Yet even experts and officials who monitor China’s military for a living disagree over how ready those forces are to invade Taiwan and how inclined Mr. Xi would be to take the momentous gamble, especially after Russia’s troubled war in Ukraine.</p> <p>“When people talk about whether or not China can or cannot do it, they’re actually talking about something different, the level of operational cost — the loss of ships, casualties — that China would have to pay to do it,” said <a href="#">Oriana Skylar Mastro</a>, a fellow at Stanford University’s Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies <a href="#">who has argued that</a> American policymakers may underestimate China’s readiness to use force.</p> <p>“They could do it,” she added. “It’s just that given Taiwan’s defenses and given if the United States is able to come to Taiwan’s aid, how much of a blood battle is this going to be?”</p> <p>Legislation passed by Congress in 1979 paves the way for American forces to step in if China tries to invade Taiwan, but it does not oblige a president to take that step.</p> <p>One key question is how close the People’s Liberation Army is to mastering the capabilities needed to dispatch tens of thousands of troops to Taiwan, by sea or air; establish a foothold on the island; and push outward to seize vital sites like ports, railways and communication hubs, as well as cities crowded with potential insurgents.</p>

The Pentagon's 2021 annual [report on the People's Republic of China](#) — widely read as an authoritative assessment — noted that it had built up the world's biggest navy as measured by the number of vessels, but said that “an attempt to invade Taiwan would likely strain PRC's armed forces and invite international intervention.”

Even if Chinese forces made it to shore on Taiwan, the difficulties of urban warfare “make an amphibious invasion of Taiwan a significant political and military risk for Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party,” the Pentagon report said.

Several studies recently [issued by the U.S. Naval War College](#) also indicated that China probably still falls short of some equipment and skills needed to make a Taiwan invasion credible. China's amphibious force “lacks the capacity to execute a large-scale assault on Taiwan,” Dennis J. Blasko, a retired lieutenant colonel, [wrote in one of the studies](#).

Few doubt that China's military has been improving its war-fighting skills. But Taiwan is also building up defenses.

On Monday, the 95th anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army, the official [Liberation Army Daily](#) stressed Mr. Xi's goal of achieving key parts of military modernization by 2027. Last year, Adm. Phil Davidson, then poised to retire as commander of United States Indo-Pacific Command, sparked debate [by telling a Senate committee](#) that China could move to seize Taiwan before then.

“There are different assessments,” said Ms. Mastro, who is also a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, “but what matters is whether China thinks they can do it, not whether we think they can do it.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 China plans military response to visit</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.newsweek.com/china-plans-military-response-nancy-pelosi-taiwan-visit-1730193">https://www.newsweek.com/china-plans-military-response-nancy-pelosi-taiwan-visit-1730193</a>
GIST	<p>China will reportedly conduct "targeted" military actions in response to U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's Taiwan visit, which has been sharply condemned by Chinese officials.</p> <p>China's plans for a military response, as well as its placing of the Chinese military on high alert, was reported by Reuters, which cited the country's defense ministry. It was not immediately clear what the operations would entail.</p> <p>Any statements or announcements on the plans did not appear to be publicly available on the website of China's defense ministry by Tuesday afternoon. When Newsweek reached out to the ministry for comment using an email address listed on its website, the message would not be delivered. China's foreign ministry, the U.S. Defense Department and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, a de facto embassy in New York City, were also contacted for comment.</p> <p>Pelosi, a California Democrat, arrived in Taiwan's capital of Taipei on Tuesday during her ongoing tour of Asia. News reports began circulating in July that Pelosi would travel to Taiwan in what would be the highest-level visit by an American official to the island in 25 years, but she did not officially confirm the stop until she arrived.</p> <p>"Our Congressional delegation's visit to Taiwan honors America's unwavering commitment to supporting Taiwan's vibrant Democracy," she said in a statement.</p> <p>In recent weeks, Chinese officials repeatedly condemned the prospect of such a visit and warned that following through with the trip would result in "consequences."</p> <p>"The U.S. must not arrange for Speaker Pelosi to visit the Taiwan region and must stop official interactions with Taiwan," Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said last month. "Should the U.S. side insist on doing otherwise, China will take strong and resolute measures to safeguard its</p>

	<p>sovereignty and territorial integrity. The U.S. must assume full responsibility for any ensuing consequences."</p> <p>News that Pelosi had officially landed in Taipei on Tuesday was again met with outrage from China.</p> <p>Hua Chunying, a spokesperson for China's foreign ministry and the assistant minister of foreign affairs, tweeted that "China will definitely take all necessary measures to resolutely safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity in response to the U.S. Speaker's visit."</p> <p>"All the consequences arising therefrom must be borne by the U.S. side and the 'Taiwan independence' separatist forces," she added.</p> <p>Taiwan, officially called the Republic of China (ROC), has been governed independently from mainland China since 1949, but Chinese officials have maintained that they view Taiwan as an "inalienable" part of China.</p> <p>In addition to the Chinese defense ministry's announcement of "targeted" military operations, the Eastern Theater Command of China's People's Liberation Army also said that it would be conducting joint military operations near Taiwan beginning Tuesday, Reuters reported.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 DOH: 9 heat related deaths amid hot spell</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/6-heat-related-deaths-reported-in-king-county/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/6-heat-related-deaths-reported-in-king-county/</a>
GIST	<p>The King County Medical Examiner's office reported three heat-related deaths and three drownings over the weekend as a scorching heat wave encompassed much of Washington state.</p> <p>The National Weather Service issued an excessive heat warning for the Puget Sound region from July 26-31, and Seattle set a record with <a href="#">six straight days of high temperatures above 90 degrees</a>.</p> <p>According to the medical examiner, three people — ages 64, 65 and 77 — died from hyperthermia between July 27 and 30, including one probable case, and three people — ages 22, 23 and 67 — died from accidental drownings.</p> <p>The data is preliminary, and more heat-related deaths might be confirmed later.</p> <p>The current death count is likely "just the tip of the iceberg" because deaths from the exacerbation of preexisting conditions do not always get reported as heat deaths, Public Health — Seattle &amp; King County spokesperson Kate Cole said.</p> <p>The state Department of Health, so far, has counted nine heat-related deaths, three of which were residents of Eastern Washington, although the count is preliminary, spokesperson Melissa Warner said. The statewide count of deaths after heat waves tend to lag behind local health departments and will not be finalized for a few months, she said.</p> <p>In Oregon, the State Medical Examiner's Office said Monday that it was investigating <a href="#">14 deaths as possibly heat-related</a>. In the Portland area, temperatures rose above 100 degrees several times over the past week.</p> <p>The heat wave was also a busy time for hospitals and emergency medicine providers.</p> <p>Between Tuesday and Sunday, there were 101 emergency department visits for heat-related illness in King County, according to Public Health — Seattle &amp; King County.</p> <p>Emergency medical services responded to more than 50 suspected heat-related illness reports between July 26 and July 31. Friday (July 28) was the busiest day for heat-related incidents, with 15.</p>

Heat illness can lead to serious health problems such as kidney failure, stroke and heart attack — and in severe cases, death.

Additional heat-related deaths might be reported later because cases may not be confirmed immediately after heat exposure, the health agency said.

Last year, about 800 people died in Oregon, Washington and British Columbia during the 2021 heat wave in late June and early July, according to an Associated Press report. In King County, [around 13 people](#) between the ages of 61 and 97 died of hyperthermia in that period.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 IAEA: Ukraine nuclear plant ‘out of control’</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/un-nuclear-chief-ukraine-nuclear-plant-is-out-of-control/">https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/un-nuclear-chief-ukraine-nuclear-plant-is-out-of-control/</a>
GIST	<p>UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The U.N. nuclear chief warned that Europe’s largest nuclear power plant in Ukraine “is completely out of control” and issued an urgent plea to Russia and Ukraine to quickly allow experts to visit the sprawling complex to stabilize the situation and avoid a nuclear accident.</p> <p>Rafael Grossi, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said in an interview Tuesday with The Associated Press that the situation is getting more perilous every day at the Zaporizhzhya plant in the southeastern city of Enerhodar, which Russian troops seized in early March, soon after their Feb. 24. invasion of Ukraine.</p> <p>“Every principle of nuclear safety has been violated” at the plant, he said. “What is at stake is extremely serious and extremely grave and dangerous.”</p> <p>Grossi cited many violations of the plant’s safety, adding that it is “in a place where active war is ongoing,” near Russian-controlled territory.</p> <p>The physical integrity of the plant hasn’t been respected, he said, citing shelling at the beginning of the war when it was taken over and continuing information from Ukraine and Russia accusing each other of attacks at Zaporizhzhya.</p> <p>There is “a paradoxical situation” in which the plant is controlled by Russia, but its Ukrainian staff continues to run its nuclear operations, leading to inevitable moments of friction and alleged violence, he said. While the IAEA has some contacts with staff, they are “faulty” and “patchy,” he said.</p> <p>Grossi said the supply chain of equipment and spare parts has been interrupted, “so we are not sure the plant is getting all it needs.” The IAEA also needs to perform very important inspections to ensure that nuclear material is being safeguarded, “and there is a lot of nuclear material there to be inspected,” he said.</p> <p>“When you put this together, you have a catalog of things that should never be happening in any nuclear facility,” Grossi said. “And this is why I have been insisting from day one that we have to be able to go there to perform this safety and security evaluation, to do the repairs and to assist as we already did in Chernobyl.”</p> <p>The Russian capture of Zaporizhzhya renewed fears that the largest of Ukraine’s 15 nuclear reactors could be damaged, setting off another emergency like the 1986 Chernobyl accident, the world’s worst nuclear disaster, which happened about 110 kilometers (65 miles) north of the capital Kyiv.</p> <p>Russian forces occupied the heavily contaminated site soon after the invasion but handed control back to the Ukrainians at the end of March. Grossi visited Chernobyl on April 27 and tweeted that the level of safety was “like a ‘red light’ blinking.” But he said Tuesday that the IAEA set up “an assistance mission” at Chernobyl at that time “that has been very, very successful so far.”</p>

The IAEA needs to go to Zaporizhzhya, as it did to Chernobyl, to ascertain the facts of what is actually happening there, to carry out repairs and inspections, and “to prevent a nuclear accident from happening,” Grossi said.

The IAEA chief said he and his team need protection to get to the plant and the urgent cooperation of Russia and Ukraine.

Each side wants this international mission to go from different sites, which is understandable in light of territorial integrity and political considerations, he said, but there’s something more urgent and that is getting the IAEA team to Zaporizhzhya.

“The IAEA, by its presence, will be a deterrent to any act of violence against this nuclear power plant,” Grossi said. “So I’m pleading as an international civil servant, as the head of an international organization, I’m pleading to both sides to let this mission proceed.”

Grossi was in New York to deliver a keynote speech at Monday’s opening of the long-delayed high-level meeting to review the landmark 50-year-old Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and eventually achieving a nuclear-free world.

In the interview, the IAEA chief also spoke about efforts to revive the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and major powers that the Trump administration abandoned in 2018 and the Biden administration has been working to renew.

Grossi said there is “an ongoing effort to try to go for yet another meeting or round to explore possibilities to come to an agreement.” He said he heard the meeting “could be soon.”

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken told the NPT review conference on Monday that Iran “has either been unwilling or unable” to accept a deal to return to the 2015 agreement aimed at reining in its nuclear program.

Grossi said “there are important differences among the negotiating parties” and important verification issues related to past activities that Iran needs to address. “It’s not impossible, it’s complex,” he said.

If the nuclear agreement, known as the JCPOA, is not extended, he said some IAEA inspections will continue. But the JCPOA provides for additional transparency and inspections “which I deem as extremely important, very necessary, because of the breadth and depth of the nuclear program in Iran,” he said.

Grossi stressed that cooperating with the IAEA, answering its questions, allowing its inspectors to go wherever they need to be, is essential for Iran to build trust and confidence. “Promises and good words will not do,” he said.

On another issue, Grossi said last September’s deal in which the United States and Britain will provide Australia with nuclear reactors to power its submarines requires an agreement with the IAEA to ensure that the amount of nuclear material in the vessel when it leaves port is there when it returns.

He said Australia hasn’t decided what type of vessel it will be getting, so while there have been preparatory talks, substantive talks can’t begin.

Because it’s a military vessel, Grossi said, “there are lots of confidential and protection of information measures that need to be embedded into any such agreement, so it’s very complex technologically.”

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HEADLINE	08/02 Skagit River debris removal still ongoing
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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/weather/severe-weather/crews-wrangle-debris-last-winters-storms/281-6a2823cf-c9df-4606-8899-40aef8c7d88d">https://www.king5.com/article/weather/severe-weather/crews-wrangle-debris-last-winters-storms/281-6a2823cf-c9df-4606-8899-40aef8c7d88d</a>
GIST	<p>SKAGIT COUNTY, Wash. — It's like a rodeo on the river.</p> <p>This week, a team of workers with ropes and motorboats is on the Skagit River wrangling logs instead of livestock. For about three days the crew will work to take apart a 40-foot logjam that has formed at the river and the Highway 9 Bridge.</p> <p>Skagit County Public Works Project Manager David Walde describes it as a different sort of pastime.</p> <p>"It's kind of like a game of Jenga," he said.</p> <p>A game of reverse Jenga, to be more specific. In this game, the goal is to find the one piece of wood that pulls the enormous pile apart.</p> <p>The crew, from Gig Harbor's Massana Construction, ties ropes to trees that have gotten stuck along a now-abandoned railroad bridge. They tie the other end to an old military surplus boat to yank them free.</p> <p>The woodpile is a massive reminder of November 2021's floods that swept away whatever was in their path.</p> <p>The old railroad bridge has been a trouble spot for logjams for generations.</p> <p>Leaving the pile would likely attract even more trees and cause bigger problems when the next flood comes.</p> <p>"It could potentially push the water over the highway, or worst-case scenario, would be scouring the bank and eating into the roadway," said Walde.</p> <p>Once freed, the trees are sent floating one-by-one downriver, which raises the question: won't they just get caught on the next bridge?</p> <p>Walde said the answer is -- sometimes -- but it's all part of a bigger plan to protect the environment.</p> <p>"In years past, we used to pull it all out and cut it up for firewood and whatnot, but fish policies have changed," he said. "It's considered habitat now so we release it and let it float down to wherever it ends up downstream."</p> <p>Skagit County spends about \$70,000 every time it has to do a cleanup like this one, which is about once per year.</p> <p>The county has considered tearing the old bridge down, but Walde said that cost was estimated at \$2 million back in 2013.</p> <p>So, the relentless river battle continues – a rodeo that will likely be run for many more years to come.</p> <p>"It all depends on what the river brings down," said Walde.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Seattle ends hazard pay grocery workers</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/seattle-city-council-votes-end-hazard-pay-grocery-store-workers/IYZDO44AQFG3JPMLVXQAVZPAD4/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/seattle-city-council-votes-end-hazard-pay-grocery-store-workers/IYZDO44AQFG3JPMLVXQAVZPAD4/</a>
GIST	SEATTLE — The Seattle City Council on Tuesday has voted 5-2 to end hazard pay for grocery store workers.

	<p>Councilmembers Tammy J. Morales and Kshama Sawant opposed ending the pay.</p> <p>Councilmembers Lisa Herbold and Teresa Mosqueda were absent during the vote.</p> <p>The end to the extra \$4 per hour workers are receiving takes effect 30 days after the legislation is approved by Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell.</p> <p>In January 2021, the council voted unanimously to approve legislation that would provide hazard pay to grocery store workers during the pandemic. The measure applied to grocery stores with at least 500 workers, paying frontline employees an extra \$4 per hour.</p> <p>In January 2022, the council declined to override former Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan's December 2021 veto after the council had voted unanimously to repeal the hazard pay.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Concrete truck drivers a no-show to work</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/concrete-truck-drivers-no-show-work-after-failed-negotiations-with-concrete-companies/HF2SSE243NGUHHVWBYAWAK4PQE/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/concrete-truck-drivers-no-show-work-after-failed-negotiations-with-concrete-companies/HF2SSE243NGUHHVWBYAWAK4PQE/</a>
GIST	<p>Teamsters Union Local 174 confirms with KIRO 7 that over 100 concrete mixer drivers did not show up to work after a secret ballot vote on Monday, stalling several projects in the area.</p> <p>Jamie Fleming with the union says it rejected the concrete companies' offer 170-1, saying the offer still does not meet its members' needs. The union says it has been under an expired contract with these companies for over a year now.</p> <p>"I mean this is just ridiculous," Fleming said.</p> <p>"And the fact that these companies are not moving from a position that they know for a fact that has been told over and over and over again that this isn't good enough. And they are not moving from that position. It's just ridiculous and it's offensive," Fleming said.</p> <p>KIRO 7 reached out to the companies CalPortland, Stoneway Concrete, as well as Salmon Bay Sand and Gravel, who shared the following statement:</p> <p><i>"We've provided Teamsters 174 with an offer that makes our drivers among the highest paid in the industry and bolsters an already generous benefits package. Our offer raises hourly wages for our drivers by nearly 22%, to more than \$45 per hour over the term of the contract.</i></p> <p><i>Our hope was that union leadership would acknowledge that our offer is fair and recommend that its members accept the agreement. That apparently did not happen today.</i></p> <p><i>We've held that any negotiation must be led by thoughtful people intent upon finding an equitable agreement. We believe that we have lived up to that aim and will continue to follow the direction of Federal mediators regarding future negotiations."</i></p> <p>Fleming says the drivers are expected to return to work tomorrow and that there is no strike at this time. But if a deal isn't made, she says the union isn't afraid to play that card.</p> <p>"But we can pull that plug again anytime if companies don't take things seriously," Fleming said.</p> <p>Union members with Teamsters were <a href="#">on strike for 145 days last year</a>. Fleming says they <a href="#">went back to work without an agreement in good faith</a>, hoping the companies involved would do the same.</p> <p>"I think it was the right move to go back to work because so many people were hurting. Our members, the communities and other construction trades," Fleming said.</p>

	KIRO 7 also asked Fleming if the union worries about whether these <a href="#">companies would outsource their driving needs</a> .
	"They tried before and it didn't work. At the end of the day, you get what you paid for," Fleming stated.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Spokane Co. elections extra ballot security</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.krem.com/article/news/politics/elections/spokane-county-ballot-safety/293-466fb944-a95b-405e-b116-b867af3c6dcd">https://www.krem.com/article/news/politics/elections/spokane-county-ballot-safety/293-466fb944-a95b-405e-b116-b867af3c6dcd</a>
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. — The Spokane County Elections Department takes ballot security very seriously and has taken several steps to ensure every resident's ballot is secure.</p> <p>To ensure all ballots get where they need to be, the elections department said it is important to make sure all ballots are put inside their security envelope. Additionally, it is important to ensure the outside of the ballot is signed and dated.</p> <p>Ballots taken to the white drop boxes are always collected and transported by teams of two. The ballots are then put into a bag that is secured with a padlock before being transported to the Spokane County Elections Office.</p> <p>The elections office staff then run the ballots through an envelope sorter that takes a photo of the barcode and signature on the outside of the ballot. The signature is checked against voter records to ensure the signature matches.</p> <p>Once the signature is confirmed, staff can begin opening envelopes. Staff eventually separate the ballot from the signed envelope, which prevents the markings on the ballot from being tied to the name on the outside.</p> <p>New in 2022, signatures are now confidential to ensure election ballot security is at the highest standard, according to Spokane County Auditor Vicky Dalton.</p> <p>"Up until late last year, technically it wasn't protected under the Public Records Act, and now it is," Dalton said. "It's important because theoretically someone could have requested all of the images of the ballot envelopes and they would have had the signatures of every single person who had returned a ballot."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Vantage wildfire continues to burn</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/vantage-highway-wildfire-continues-to-burn-in-eastern-washington">https://www.q13fox.com/news/vantage-highway-wildfire-continues-to-burn-in-eastern-washington</a>
GIST	<p><b>VANTAGE, Wash.</b> - Eastern Washington is dry, hot and windy a combination perfect for wildfires.</p> <p>One, the Vantage Highway Fire, has already grown in size to 10,500 acres – or roughly 12.5 square miles, the size of a small city.</p> <p>On Tuesday, aircraft would fly overhead one after another from the Columbia River to the front lines dumping water on the fire – creating what felt like an assembly line of fire suppression in the sky. Occasionally, they would take fuel breaks and the smoke would quickly darken as the fire reached new patches of fuel.</p> <p>"They'd pick up water on one end, and they'd swoop over to the other side," explained Dan Haven, a local who could hear the planes from his home on the other side of the river.</p> <p>"Any time you've got flames here with the wind, you've got to be conscious."</p>

Haven came to a scenic overlook in Quincy with his son to get a better look at the planes spraying water and fire retardant on the fire from above. He said it became obvious how close they were to the frontlines when water splashed onto their car from what he assumed was a plane carrying water to the fire above.

"They're dripping – they were flying really low," he said.

The fire took out close to 60 power poles, according to the Kittitas PUD general manager, but the small power company managed to get the lights turned back on to most of Vantage mid-afternoon, roughly one day after the fire exploded in size.

The work to repair the rest of the lines will allow a number of cell phone servers and maintenance facilities for the nearby wind farm to come back online.

To date, the Washington DNR is reporting that the fire is 10% contained. No structures have been damaged, though Heather Powell – who lives across the street from the area where the fire started – told FOX 13 that a few outhouses and smaller structures that her neighbor stored animals in had burned.

Both the woman, her ranch hand and the dogs that were on the property all got out unscathed. Powell said it was a close call – that her boyfriend, a volunteer firefighter, was on the ground shortly after the fire began and saw a wall of flames more than 10 feet high on the other side of Vantage Highway. Luckily, it never leapt across the road.

Instead, the fire spread the opposite direction. On Tuesday afternoon the smoke continued to carry in the opposite direction of town – though enough smoke was billowing off that satellite imagery could capture the smoke near the Columbia basin.

As Nick Bond, Washington's state climatologist, explained: Washington is in a dire situation east of the Cascades. Despite a cool, and wet, Spring the drought monitors have worsened rapidly.

"In July the weather switched and we had an unusually long heat wave that dried things out," he said. "Right now, the driest part of the state – relative to normal for this part of the year – is on the eastern side of the Cascades."

It's a scenario Bond is used to seeing. For the past few decades, the climate in Washington has been hotter, and drier.

The UW Climate Impacts Group has found that Washington has already warmed 1.3 degrees since 1895. In the summer, most cities feel roughly 2 degrees warmer.

This year hasn't been as intense as last year's heat dome, but the recent heat wave broke records for its duration – and long hot days have only added to the dry, fuel for wildfires. Windy days like we saw this week only increase the threat of major fires.

"We've been so warm this last week especially, and with the anticipation of more warm weather in the next few weeks we're poised to have some more problems," said Bond.

Bond said much of that could come down to luck: whether we see fires spark, or whether we see high winds that intensify already dangerous situations.

For now, in Vantage the concern is making sure the current fire is put out before it grows larger.

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HEADLINE	08/02 Russia faces long term economic oblivion
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnbc.com/2022/08/02/russia-faces-economic-oblivion-despite-short-term-resilience.html">https://www.cnbc.com/2022/08/02/russia-faces-economic-oblivion-despite-short-term-resilience.html</a>

Russia is facing “economic oblivion” in the long term because of international sanctions and the flight of businesses, several economists have said.

The International Monetary Fund last week upgraded Russia’s gross domestic product estimate for 2022 by 2.5 percentage points, meaning the economy is now projected to contract by 6% this year. The IMF said the economy seemed to be weathering the barrage of economic sanctions better than expected.

The [Central Bank of Russia](#) surprised markets in late July by [cutting its key interest rate](#) back to 8%, below its prewar level, citing cooling inflation, a strong currency and the risk of recession.

The [ruble](#) recovered from historic early losses in the aftermath of [the invasion of Ukraine](#) to [become a top performer on the global foreign exchange market](#) this year, prompting Russian President [Vladimir Putin](#) to declare that Western sanctions had failed.

Meanwhile, Russia has continued to export energy and other commodities while leveraging Europe’s dependency on its gas supplies.

However, many economists see long-lasting costs to the Russian economy from the exit of foreign firms – which will hit production capacity and capital and result in a “brain drain” – along with the loss of its long-term oil and gas markets and diminished access to critical imports of technology and inputs.

Ian Bremmer, president of Eurasia Group, told CNBC on Monday that while short-term disruptions from sanctions are less than originally anticipated, the real debate goes beyond 2022.

“Anecdotal evidence suggests the manufacturing dislocations are rising as inventories are depleted and scarcity of foreign parts becomes binding. Chips and transport are among the sectors cited, in some cases reflecting dual-use military demand,” Bremmer said.

“Governmental arrears may be contributing to broader shortages. Imports of consumer goods are increasing, but less so intermediate/investment goods.”

Bremmer highlighted that as sanctions intensify and popular discontent grows, the educated are leaving Russia, underscoring the importance of trade sanctions on sensitive technologies and the “longer timeline by which sanctions undermine trend productivity and growth.”

“Brain drain leads to a direct decline in the working age population, especially high-productivity workers, reducing GDP,” he said.

“It affects overall productivity, reducing innovation and affects overall confidence in the economy, reducing investment and savings.”

Eurasia Group projects a sustained, long-term decline in economic activity to eventually result in a 30%-50% contraction in Russian GDP from its prewar level.

### **‘Catastrophically crippling’**

A Yale University study published last month, which analyzed high-frequency consumer, trade and shipping data that its authors say shows a truer picture than the Kremlin is presenting, argued that rumors of Russia’s economic survival had been greatly exaggerated.

The paper suggested international sanctions and an exodus of more than 1,000 global companies are “catastrophically crippling” the Russian economy.

“Russia’s strategic positioning as a commodities exporter has irrevocably deteriorated, as it now deals from a position of weakness with the loss of its erstwhile main markets, and faces steep challenges executing a ‘pivot to Asia’ with non-fungible exports such as piped gas,” the Yale economists said.

They added that despite some “lingering leakiness,” Russian imports have “largely collapsed,” with Moscow now facing challenges in securing inputs, parts and technology from increasingly jittery trade partners and as a result, seeing widespread supply shortages in its domestic economy.

“Despite Putin’s delusions of self-sufficiency and import substitution, Russian domestic production has come to a complete standstill with no capacity to replace lost businesses, products and talent; the hollowing out of Russia’s domestic innovation and production base has led to soaring prices and consumer angst,” the report said.

“As a result of the business retreat, Russia has lost companies representing ~40% of its GDP, reversing nearly all of three decades worth of foreign investment and buttressing unprecedented simultaneous capital and population flight in a mass exodus of Russia’s economic base.”

#### **No path out of ‘economic oblivion’**

The apparent resilience of the Russian economy and the resurgence of the ruble were largely attributed to soaring energy prices and strict capital control measures – implemented by the Kremlin to limit the amount of foreign currency leaving the country – along with sanctions restricting its capacity to import.

Russia is the world’s largest exporter of gas and second-largest exporter of oil, and thus the hit to GDP from the war and associated sanctions has been softened by high commodity prices and Europe’s continued dependence on Russian energy for the time being.

Russia has now relaxed some of its capital controls and cut interest rates in a bid to bring the currency down and shore up its fiscal account.

“Putin is resorting to patently unsustainable, dramatic fiscal and monetary intervention to smooth over these structural economic weaknesses, which has already sent his government budget into deficit for the first time in years and drained his foreign reserves even with high energy prices – and Kremlin finances are in much, much more dire straits than conventionally understood,” the Yale economists said.

They also noted that Russia’s domestic financial markets were the worst performers in the world so far this year despite the strict capital controls, with investors pricing in “sustained, persistent weakness within the economy with liquidity and credit contracting,” along with Russia’s effective ostracization from international financial markets.

“Looking ahead, there is no path out of economic oblivion for Russia as long as the allied countries remain unified in maintaining and increasing sanctions pressure against Russia,” the report concluded.

“Defeatist headlines arguing that Russia’s economy has bounced back are simply not factual – the facts are that, by any metric and on any level, the Russian economy is reeling, and now is not the time to step on the brakes.”

The Russian Embassy in London was not immediately available to comment on the Yale University study’s findings when contacted by CNBC.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Lyme disease epidemic? 357% rural jump</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.studyfinds.org/ticks-lyme-disease-rural-america/">https://www.studyfinds.org/ticks-lyme-disease-rural-america/</a>
GIST	<p><b>NEW YORK</b> — The summer season is tick season and that means one thing — Lyme disease cases are going to rise in the United States. Now, a concerning new report finds rural communities have seen cases of the tick-borne illness skyrocket in recent years.</p> <p>Over the last 15 years, from 2007 to 2021, insurance claims for Lyme disease diagnoses have exploded by <b>357 percent</b> in rural areas. Although people typically encounter disease-carrying ticks in the woods and</p>



tall grassy areas, researchers from FAIR Health say urban communities are seeing a surge as well. The non-profit says urban areas across the U.S. have seen a 65-percent rise in Lyme cases since 2007.

Study authors analyzed a database of more than 36 billion privately-billed healthcare claims to discover this alarming trend.

From 2016 to 2021, [Lyme disease](#) diagnoses increased by 60 percent in rural America, while urban America saw a 19-percent increase. These cases typically reach their peak in June and July each year — as the country moves into the heart of summer. With more people outside in fields, parks, and other grassy areas, it's no surprise more people in rural areas develop Lyme after a tick bite during these months.

Interestingly, the team found that there are more cases of Lyme in urban areas between November and April.

#### **Where are Americans encountering ticks?**

Historically, ticks are a major problem in [the Northeast](#) and upper Midwest, but the new study found that map may be growing in recent years. In 2017, the highest rates of Lyme diagnoses were found in New Jersey, Connecticut, North Carolina, Rhode Island, and Vermont — with North Carolina (third-highest) coming as a surprise to researchers.

In 2021, however, North Carolina did not make the top five. New Jersey continued to rank as the state with the greatest proportion of Lyme disease diagnosis claims in the United States. Vermont, Maine, Rhode Island, and Connecticut rounded out the top five. Researchers for FAIR Health add that the addition of Maine to the top five is also concerning, suggesting that [disease-carrying ticks](#) are now an issue in that state as well.

#### **Lyme still a problem after treatment**

The study also notes that Lyme disease can still affect patients long after a doctor treats the bacterial infection. While [antibiotics](#) can treat the illness, some patients can develop long-term symptoms, including fatigue, muscle and joint pain, and cognitive dysfunction.

“Lyme disease remains a growing public health concern. FAIR Health will continue to use its repository of claims data to provide actionable and relevant insights to healthcare stakeholders seeking to better understand the ongoing rise of Lyme disease cases,” says FAIR Health President Robin Gelburd in a [media release](#).

Most cases of Lyme are mild, and some may [not even know they're sick](#). The tell-tale sign you've been bitten by a tick is a bullseye-like rash at the sight of infection. These cases are usually treatable with antibiotics.

In more serious and untreated cases however, Lyme can spread to the heart, joints, nervous system, and other major organs. These patients can develop neurological problems, weeks or even months after infection. Serious side-effects include inflammation of the brain (meningitis), temporary paralysis of the face, and weakness in the limbs.

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HEADLINE	08/02 Russia's war reveals problems in space
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wired.com/story/russias-war-in-ukraine-reveals-more-problems-in-space/">https://www.wired.com/story/russias-war-in-ukraine-reveals-more-problems-in-space/</a>
GIST	<b>EARLY LAST WEEK</b> , Russia's new man helming the Roscosmos space agency abruptly <a href="#">announced</a> that it would end its participation in running the International Space Station in as little as two years. Such a move would terminate an enduring symbol of international cooperation and effectively end the station's life prematurely, as it will eventually have to be de-orbited, piece by piece. “We will fulfill all our obligations to our partners, but the decision [on] leaving this station after 2024 [has] been made,” he told a state publication.

But it's not clear how serious Yuri Borisov really is about Russia's departure coming so soon. Later that week, he [clarified](#) that Russia would withdraw from the space station once Roscosmos starts launching modules for a new space station, which he claimed could happen as early as 2028. His comments about leaving the ISS echoed those made by his bombastic predecessor, Dmitry Rogozin, as Russia was battered with international sanctions following its [invasion of Ukraine](#) in February—yet did not actually precipitate a withdrawal from the station, which is jointly operated by space agencies from Russia, the United States, Europe, Japan, and Canada.

“It could be the new guy just showing his loyalty to the one person whose opinion really matters—Putin—indicating he's going to be as tough as Rogozin had been,” says Victoria Samson, the Washington office director for the Secure World Foundation, a nonpartisan think tank based in Broomfield, Colorado.

Casey Dreier, senior space policy adviser for the Planetary Society, a nonprofit research organization based in Pasadena, California, agrees, pointing out that with Russia, actions speak louder than words. There would be dire consequences for Roscosmos if Russia decouples from the ISS too soon, he adds. “If they were to do a near-term disentangling from the ISS, it would be to functionally give up their human spaceflight program. Given the symbolic nature in which Putin sees the space program, it seems unlikely that they would step away from that,” Dreier says.

By contrast, NASA's chief, Bill Nelson, has been clear about the US space agency's plans for the ISS. [He has said](#) that NASA is committed to continuing station operations through 2030, assuming the Russians are still onboard till then. The [CHIPS and Science Act](#), passed by Congress on July 28, officially authorizes NASA to do so. After that point, NASA will be the primary customer for a [new commercial space station](#), which will take over in low Earth orbit.

The future of Russia's space sector looks bleak due to a drainage of resources, Samson says. Roscosmos has struggled with decreased funding in recent years, and it's navigating tensions with other space powers [thanks to the war in Ukraine](#) and disputes with NATO. Russia is now constrained by sanctions that affect technology imports. The country has lost launch contracts at its Baikonur Cosmodrome spaceport in Kazakhstan. It has lost business with the US, as NASA and its partners' astronauts can now travel to the ISS on [SpaceX](#) and [Boeing](#) spacecraft instead of having to [book a ride on a Soyuz rocket](#).

The European Space Agency has also cut ties with Roscosmos, most notably on the ExoMars mission, which has been delayed until later this decade.

There's not much going for Roscosmos at this point other than the ISS—or a replacement to be called [the Russian Orbital Service Station](#), which Borisov claimed could be developed and launched as early as 2028.

That's an overoptimistic timeline, Samson and Dreier argue, considering it took more than 12 years for Russia to develop its Nauka ISS module, which launched to the ISS last year. “I don't see that, considering their funding issues. And Russia's civil space program has quality control issues and corruption issues as well. I don't know that they could afford to build their own space station and continue to contribute to the ISS,” Samson says.

China is building its own space station, having launched the country's second module, Wentian, last week. A third module, Mengtian, is planned for launch in October. Neither Chinese nor Russian officials have given any indication that they will collaborate on that station, which orbits at an inclination that would be difficult to reach from a Russian launch site. China and Russia have agreed, however, to jointly build a research station on the moon in the 2030s.

One of Russia's biggest investments in space continues to be on the military side. The country has developed, deployed, and even used [weapons against spacecraft](#), with consequences for international space security. Russia has tested anti-satellite missiles, most recently [in November 2021](#), and lasers as

well, and it has made use of electronic and cyberweapons against satellites and ground systems. (The US and Chinese militaries are working on similar technologies.)

“In Ukraine, we’ve seen GPS jamming, communications jamming, the jamming of Starlink—that they were able to eventually work around—and the cyberattack of ViaSat ground terminals,” says Kaitlyn Johnson, a researcher at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a nonpartisan think tank in Washington, DC. But considering the relatively low cost of such attacks, so far the Russians haven’t employed as much cyberwarfare as experts anticipated, Samson says.

In any case, the fractious state of affairs ultimately means more risks to spacecraft and the ground infrastructure they depend on, including commercial satellites that have been involved in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Such satellites include US-based [satellite imaging companies](#) like Maxar and Planet and radar imagery companies like Capella Space, which can spot military convoys and troop movements. Elon Musk and SpaceX have had no qualms about intervening on Ukraine’s behalf as well by aiding military communications with [Starlink](#). This could be part of a trend, Johnson says; she thinks SpaceX is becoming more like a traditional military contractor in the vein of Northrop Grumman and Lockheed Martin, which similarly work with both NASA and the Pentagon. SpaceX has government contracts for [launching military satellites](#) and building [missile-tracking satellites](#) and is exploring a [Pentagon partnership](#) for the space transportation of military supplies.

And when satellite companies become enmeshed in conflicts on the ground, that could have repercussions in space. Militaries can only attack military objectives, not civilian ones, according to the international [law of armed conflict](#). But that won’t stop “dual use” civilian spacecraft like Starlink’s and Maxar’s, along with their ground infrastructure, from becoming potential targets for Russia, if they’re being used for both civilian purposes and military ones in Ukraine, says David Koplow, a Georgetown law professor and author of a [recent paper](#) on the law of armed conflict in space.

For decades, Koplow says, the US Defense Department has benefited from contracts with space companies, making some satellites at least part-time military spacecraft, rather than buying their own fleets, the way the Navy has its own ships and the Air Force has its own squadrons. “The consistent policy of the United States has been to mix military and civilian functions on a particular satellite, and I argue that that’s illegal and unwise, as evidenced by circumstances like this, where dual use of the satellite renders it subject to attack,” he says. In his view, Russia could easily and legally attack a broad range of US commercial satellites if they are being used in the conflict.

While geopolitical rivalries have extended into space since the Sputnik era, now, in the aftermath of the ongoing Ukraine conflict, growing international tensions in space extend primarily from Russia, argues Scott Pace, director of George Washington University’s Space Policy Institute and executive secretary of the [National Space Council](#) during the Trump administration. “With the exception of the Russians, most countries seem to be on the same page in space. Even in the case of China, we’re obviously concerned about their [anti-satellite weapons]. But diplomatically, we’re not conflicting with anybody that much except for the Russians. They really are kind of isolated right now,” he says.

Even during times of conflict, the International Space Station has served as a bridge between nations and cultures since the late 1990s, with astronauts working together. For now, Russia has agreed to continue crew swaps with the US to the ISS starting in September, with US astronaut Frank Rubio launching to the space station from Kazakhstan and with Russian cosmonaut Anna Kikina launching from Florida along with NASA and Japanese astronauts.

Nevertheless, when the station’s lifetime comes to an end—whether that’s in 2028, 2030, or later—this kind of collaboration could end with it. “While it’s been a tremendous achievement that we’ve had humans in orbit continuously for over two decades now thanks to the ISS, and they’ve been able to do a lot of scientific experiments on it and because of it, in my opinion, its biggest legacy is the role it’s been playing as a diplomatic tool,” Samson says. “With one of the partners effectively taking their ball and going home, I think you lose that benefit. And that aspect not being replaced is what worries me the most.”

HEADLINE	08/03 'Unsustainable' summer travel chaos
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/flight-attendants-summer-travel-chaos-2022/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/flight-attendants-summer-travel-chaos-2022/index.html</a>
GIST	<p>(CNN) — British flight attendant Kris Major has worked in aviation for over two decades. He's seen the industry suffer and recover in the wake of 9/11, SARS and foot and mouth disease.</p> <p>Now, Major's on the front line of what he reckons is the worst aviation crisis yet: the 2022 summer of travel chaos. Major, who serves as chair of the European Transport Workers Federation's Joint Aircrew Committee, representing European flight attendants and pilots, says flight crew are struggling.</p> <p>"It's completely unsustainable as a job," Major tells <a href="#">CNN Travel</a>.</p> <p>As global travelers return to the skies in droves after a pandemic-enforced pause, airlines and airports across the world are grappling to match supply with demand.</p> <p>The result is flights canceled left right and center, luggage mislaid, and travelers losing confidence in the aviation industry as a whole. In Major's view, it's "absolutely shambolic."</p> <p>His words are echoed by flight attendants across the globe.</p> <p>"The lack of staff, delays, cancellations, no baggage -- I think it's a very difficult situation for everybody," Germany-based Lufthansa flight attendant Daniel Kassa Mbuambi tells CNN Travel.</p> <p>"There's some kind of breakdown happening that I believe should be preventable," is how US flight attendant Allie Malis puts it.</p> <p><b>Front line in the skies</b></p> <p>When aviation ground to a halt in the early days of the pandemic, most airlines and airports either furloughed or laid off many ground and air workers. Many carriers operated a skeleton staff for the best part of the last two years.</p> <p>Now, travel demand is back, and the industry is struggling to catch up and rehire. For the flight attendants still on the books, it's a "very hard situation," says Lufthansa's Kassa Mbuambi, who is also chairman of German flight attendant union UFO.</p> <p>Crew say this strain means occasionally operating a flight with minimum staff on board, as Kassa Mbuambi describes, or air crew sleeping at airports, as Allie Malis recounts.</p> <p>Malis, who is also the government affairs representative at the Association of Professional Flight Attendants, a union representing American Airlines air crew, also describes "uncomfortable" situations where crew, delayed on incoming flights, find themselves sprinting through the airport to make their next job.</p> <p>"Sometimes the passengers are cheering that you're arriving because it means their plane's going to go, or even that they're upset -- they think it's your fault that the flight has been delayed when you can't work two flights at once, although I'm sure the airlines wish we could," she says.</p> <p>The flight attendants say situations like these, along with unpredictable schedules, wreak havoc on crew mental and physical well-being.</p> <p>"Sickness levels have gone through the roof, fatigue levels have gone through the roof, not because [flight attendants are] rejecting or they're protesting in any way. It's just that they can't cope -- they just can't cope with the constant changes," says British flight attendant Major.</p> <p>When airlines suggest current issues are due to staff absenteeism, it's disheartening, says Malis.</p>

"It's kind of offensive that we're being blamed for any type of labor shortage or operational mismanagement, because the airlines have failed to adequately plan," she adds.

"Flight attendants are being maxed out, working the longest days we've had, with the shortest rest periods overnight that we've had and that does get you sick, that does lead to exhaustion and fatigue and weakens your immune system."

Malis says American Airlines recently scrapped an absenteeism policy that exposed crew members to disciplinary action if they took Covid-related leave. An airline spokesperson did not comment on this change to CNN, but said "taking care of our crew members at all times, including while they're away from home, is a priority."

The American Airlines representative said the airline wasn't aware of any recent reports of crew members sleeping at airports.

"If we believe there may be an issue with a crew accommodation, it is all hands on deck to prevent that from happening," said the representative.

A spokesperson for Lufthansa said that the aviation industry as a whole is "suffering from bottlenecks and staff shortages, noticeable especially during peak periods."

The post-pandemic travel boom was "expected -- but not in this intensity," the Lufthansa spokesperson added. Lufthansa recently canceled a slew of summer flights, with the spokesperson stating the aim was to reduce on-the-day cancellations.

While Covid and fatigue-related time off has reached 30% among Lufthansa ground staff, the German airline said crew and pilot time off "is significantly lower, in the single digits." The Lufthansa spokesperson said that, as a result, operating flights at minimum crew capacity was not needed "on normal crew patterns."

Flight attendant contracts allow for changeable work days, so flying's always been a job that came with a degree of unpredictability. But as the industry is stretched, flight attendants say this uncertainty has ramped up.

Major suggests unpredictable schedules, combined with current wage conditions, is why workers who left the industry during the pandemic aren't returning.

"There's a reason they won't come back," he says. "The industry has created its own problem."

Malis echoes this: "Why would anyone want to apply to be a flight attendant or any other airline worker when we're kind of getting worked to the bone?"

Major thinks the issue can only be solved by the industry accepting there's a problem -- and a problem that he sees as inherent to the current mode of operations, not specific to post-Covid flying.

Through his work for pan-European aviation union, ETF, Major is advocating for upping air crew wages to match the rising cost of living and improving work-life balance.

Kassa Mbuambi agrees. "We have to provide better conditions," he says, adding that his Germany-based union is in regular conversation with other cabin crew associations in Europe to work through solutions. He thinks higher salaries and more structured working conditions would better reflect flight attendants' role.

"We are not just there to provide you some drinks, but we are also there to guarantee safety," says Kassa Mbuambi.

### Passengers relations

At the height of the pandemic, one of the biggest issues facing air crew was unruly passengers, with the [majority of incidents in the US](#) reportedly related to mask compliance.

American flight attendant Malis says passenger disruption has become less of an issue in the US since the mask mandate was lifted.

But while mask-related issues might have ceased in the US, they're rumbling on elsewhere. Kassa Mbuambi and Major suggest that different countries having different rules creates ongoing frustration among European travelers. These frustrations can be magnified when travelers are also facing travel disruption.

"We currently have a lot of passengers traveling without their bags," says Lufhansa's Kassa Mbuambi. "So of course, you have a lot of angry passengers."

Kassa Mbuambi's plea to the traveling public is aviation workers "are doing what we can do."

"All the staff -- doesn't matter if they're ground staff or if they're cabin crews -- they do all the best they can do. But if you don't have enough staff, then you can't solve every problem."

Major echoes this sentiment, and also reminds passengers that air crew experience travel frustrations from the other side too. He's heading on a family vacation soon and begrudgingly sees disruption as inevitable.

Malis points out the summer vacation season always stretches the system, suggesting this fall could "be a great opportunity to reset, to make sure our systems are working properly to handle high volumes of traffic."

But, like Major and Kassa Mbuambi, she thinks a long-term solution can only come with revamping the current system.

"We, as flight attendants, we're right there with our passengers, we're in it with them, we feel their frustrations firsthand, if not even more, because this has happened to us so frequently, since we fly for a living," says Malis.

"We want to do right by our passengers, we can see these poor people who are just trying to get to where they need to go, we can read their stress, we can see their anxiety and so we really just do want them to get to where they want to go, we want to hopefully say goodbye with a smile."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Pilot fatigue remains high concern</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.foxbusiness.com/lifestyle/pilot-fatigue-remains-high-concern-carriers-try-recapture-revenue">https://www.foxbusiness.com/lifestyle/pilot-fatigue-remains-high-concern-carriers-try-recapture-revenue</a>
GIST	<p>Pilots are being "recklessly utilized" <a href="#">as airlines across the industry</a> work tirelessly to recapture revenue lost during the pandemic, according to Pilots Association Communications Chair Dennis Tajer.</p> <p>The issue is that airlines are scheduling too many flights for the number of trained and current pilots they have, Tajer told FOX Business. It's creating an uptick in pilots calling out fatigued or who have hit the legal limit of duty hours, he said.</p> <p>Although this means that the flight will likely be <a href="#">delayed or canceled</a>, pilots have a moral obligation to ensure that they're not flying when they're not fit for duty, he added.</p> <p>Tajer has been the communications chair of the Allied Pilots Association, the labor union representing American Airlines pilots, for the past 15 years. He has also spent more than 30 years flying for American Airlines.</p>



During the entire month of June, he says there was a fourfold increase in the number of fatigue calls from American Airlines pilots alone. On some days, there was a tenfold increase, which is a "warning sign that the system is under unnecessary duress," according to Tajer.

"This reckless utilization decreases reliability and can narrow the margin of safety," he said. "We are holding the line on the margin of safety, but a functional safety culture should not have such pressures."

Throughout the first two years of the pandemic, airlines received \$54 billion in federal aid to help airlines avoid mass layoffs and bankruptcy.

Although the investment helped keep airlines from collapsing, the funds were also supposed to "ensure they were ready for the recovery by retaining and keeping pilots trained [and] current, so they could fly immediately as demand returned," Tajer said.

Instead, airlines convinced many pilots to retire early or take leaves of absence while passenger demand plummeted. Now, there are not nearly enough trained and current pilots, he added.

Consulting firm Oliver Wyman predicted that demand for pilots will outstrip supply in most regions worldwide between 2022 and 2024. The firm also estimated that this would continue to worsen over the next 10 years.

In North America, where travel rebounded faster than in other regions, there is already a shortage of 8,000 pilots, and it is expected to grow worse throughout the next decade, according to data from the consulting firm.

Boeing, in its latest Pilot and Technician Outlook, said 602,000 will be needed to fly global commercial airliners, with 128,000 needed in the North American market.

Although Airlines for America, the trade association for the country's leading passenger and cargo airlines, said its passenger carrier data did not reflect a lack of pilots, Regional Airline Association CEO Faye Malarkey Black said in May that the pilot shortage is worsening as travel rebounds.

Due to the worsening pilot shortage, 188 communities lost at least a quarter of their air service during the pandemic or the first half of 2022, according to Malarkey Black.

"While demand is strong, I want to acknowledge we are grappling with a real and worsening pilot shortage that is challenging us across the industry to fully meet demand," said Malarkey Black.

Tajer said some pilots are working the maximum number of hours that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) allows on a more regular basis.

FAA regulations require a minimum rest period of 10 hours between shifts, including eight hours of uninterrupted sleep.

Additionally, the duty period, which is the length of a pilot's day, can only range between 12 and 14 hours. Flight time for a two-pilot domestic crew during normal duty ranges between eight and nine hours. Both duty period and flight time depend on the time a pilot starts their day and how many flight legs they have.

The agency told FOX Business that it maintains these "strict duty and rest regulations for pilots to ensure continued safety."

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HEADLINE	08/03 US, SKorea exercise: kill NKorea leader?
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.thedailybeast.com/us-to-enrage-kim-jong-un-with-assassination-dry-run?ref=home">https://www.thedailybeast.com/us-to-enrage-kim-jong-un-with-assassination-dry-run?ref=home</a>

SEOUL—The U.S and South Korea are about to play war games again, and this time they're going for the jugular.

For their first joint military exercises in five years, the Americans and South Koreans will polish up what military people here call the "kill chain" in which they target the North's missile and nuclear sites plus bases needed to supply, refuel, and rearm them.

Sources familiar with the U.S.-South Korea military alliance say the games will climax in a "decapitation" exercise where they play at invading the heart of the North Korean command structure and taking out the leader, Kim Jong Un. Although it's only a game, he's sure to take it personally as he did in September 2017 when he ordered the North's sixth, and most recent, nuclear test after that year's war games.

The U.S. will not acknowledge—formally or officially—that decapitation is on the agenda. Unofficially, though, that's the name of the game, as explained to The Daily Beast by those familiar with the upcoming exercise as well as the exercises of five years ago.

Analysts warned the mere mention of decapitation infuriates Kim, already intimidated by the concept of the "kill chain." Fearful of assassination, wary of discontent among his own poverty-stricken people, he's reportedly tightened security.

One of Kim's greatest fears is being caught out in the open in a drone attack similar to those that killed al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahri at his home in Kabul on Sunday and Iran's most feared military commander, Maj. Gen. Qasem Soleimani. Aware that he could well be the primary target in any "preemptive strike," Kim makes himself extremely hard to find, only moving about at night, in different vehicles, accompanied by dozens of bodyguards.

"Decapitation is a mission to capture or kill a high-value target, e.g., manhunting," David Maxwell, a retired U.S. Army Special Forces colonel who joined in the annual games during his five tours in South Korea, told The Daily Beast. "If you get the head of the military forces (which is Kim Jong Un), theoretically you gut the head of the snake."

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and South Korea's defense minister, Lee Jong-sup, agreed last weekend on holding the exercises for the first time since Donald Trump canceled them right after his summit with Kim in Singapore in June 2018 during which he professed they "fell in love." The exercises, to begin this month, are called Ulchi Freedom Shield, named for a seventh-century general who defeated Chinese invaders.

The decision of the Americans and South Koreans to tighten their bond by joining forces on land, air, and sea fulfills the promises of South Korea's conservative President Yoon Suk-yeol to improve strained relations. His predecessor, the left-leaning Moon Jae-in, reluctantly tolerated exercises only on computers rather than real live war games, which are seen as essential for the alliance, because he wanted to pursue reconciliation with the North. Now U.S. and Korean forces will go beyond their theoretical command post exercises, known as CPX, to field training exercises (FTX), in a show which Ankit Panda of the Carnegie Endowment said "could involve significant mobilization." About 50,000 South Korean and nearly 20,000 U.S. troops joined in the last such games five years go.

The "kill chain," said Panda, is the first axis of South Korea's "three-axis defense plan" focusing "on the intelligence and strike capabilities necessary to detect and preempt North Korean missile launches." Second is "Korea Massive Punishment and Retaliation," KMPR, climaxing in the decapitation in which special forces snuff the target—one Kim Jong Un—in an intricately choreographed shock strike. Third is air and missile defense.

"The 'kill chain' concept emerged about 10 or so years ago," said Steve Tharpe, who's made a career here first as an army officer, then as a civilian official with the U.S. command. "It involves detection

and preemptive strike if an impending North Korean major attack is certain. Leadership decapitation would be part of the KMPR.”

U.S and South Korean troops will play the war games at a time of mounting tensions between the two Koreas. Kim has promised to “annihilate” South Korea in what he called “a grave warning to the conservative South Korean government and warmongers” in response to reports the South was seriously considering a “preemptive strike” against the North’s nuclear and missile facilities.

For the first time Kim mentioned Yoon by name, warning his government could be “wiped out” by the North’s “nuclear deterrent.” The U.S., by “holding large-scale joint exercises,” he said, is pushing relations “to a point that is irreversible.”

Analysts are convinced North Korea is ready for its seventh nuclear test—its first since 2017—as the Americans and South Koreans target Kim and his closest aides in another decapitation game.

“Decapitation resembles attacks on the North Korean nuclear forces in that you have to locate the target, refine that location and identify the possible munitions that could be used against it,” said Bruce Bennett, long-time Korea analyst at the RAND Corporation. “The first task could be done by a drone or reconnaissance aircraft,” he said, but Seoul also has decided “to create a brigade of special forces to help perform this function.”

This brigade, he said, “would presumably be inserted into various locations in North Korea, presumably in North Korean uniforms, trying to find evidence of Kim’s presence or the presence of other regime leaders, refine that information, and then direct an attack on the target.” The attack “could be assisted by drones” or “simply involve shining a laser on the target, simulating the giving of guidance for a laser guided bomb.”

“I personally think that the preemptive strike option against North Korea is a bad idea,” Steve Tharpe told The Daily Beast, “It would immediately lead to a full-scale war—a resumption of full-scale warfare—Korean War: Part II.”

Another Korean War, he predicted, “would make the war in Ukraine pale in comparison, even if nuclear weapons weren’t used.” And “if nerve agents and nukes are used, we would probably see a greater number of deaths here than occurred during the fighting from 1950 to 1953—Korean War: Part I”

Tharpe is confident the North Korean leadership doesn’t want another all-out Korean War knowing “that will lead to their demise regardless of how many casualties they inflict.” The danger, he said, “is a misjudgment of the situation that leads to unnecessary war.”

Credit the military of South Korea, the Republic of Korea, with introducing the term “kill chain” in the first place. “It’s an ROK concept of how to defend South Korea,” a spokesman at the headquarters of U.S. Forces Korea and the United Nations Command told The Daily Beast. What it means, said a South Korean military spokesman, is: “When North Korea fires missiles, we will attack the North Korean missile system.”

Neither the American nor South Korean spokesmen, however, would talk about “decapitation,” an informal term for the grand finale to the “kill chain”—and a word seen as exacerbating tensions.

“I would caution against saying publicly that ‘decapitation’ of North Korea’s leadership might be the premise of any exercise,” said Evans Revere, a retired senior U.S. diplomat who’s been focusing on North Korea issues for years. “Suggesting that elimination of Kim Jong Un and his inner circle would be the goal of the alliance would deeply anger the North Korean regime and require the strongest possible response from Pyongyang.”

	<p>North Korea “understands what the United States and the Republic of Korea are capable of doing and what they might try to do in the event of a conflict,” said Revere. “There’s no need to rub Pyongyang’s face in this harsh reality.”</p> <p>The notion of rehearsing the assassination of Kim Jong Un by beheading his regime inevitably raises questions among those who would love to get rid of the man but wonder if killing him would solve all that much. Undoubtedly there would be a power struggle, possibly including his younger sister Kim Yo Jong, waiting in the wings, but then what?</p> <p>Colonel Maxwell compared possible decapitation to the killing of Osama Bin Laden. “Does it work in practice or only in theory,” he asked, suggesting decapitation of the head might not accomplish the goal of destroying the enemy.</p> <p>Choi Jin-wook, president of the Center for Strategic and Cultural Studies in Seoul, saw decapitation as crucial to victory. “For a dictatorship like North Korea,” he told The Daily Beast, “it is the best strategy to get rid of the dictator to win the war.”</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/03 China blocks some Taiwan imports</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/china-blocks-taiwan-imports-avoids-chip-disruption-87858952">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/china-blocks-taiwan-imports-avoids-chip-disruption-87858952</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>BEIJING -- China blocked imports of citrus and fish from Taiwan in retaliation for a visit by Nancy Pelosi, a top American lawmaker, to the self-ruled island but has avoided disrupting one of the world's most important technology and manufacturing relationships.</p> <p>The two sides, which split in 1949 after a civil war, have no official relations but multibillion-dollar business ties, especially in the flow of Taiwanese-made processor chips needed by Chinese factories that assemble the world's smartphones and other electronics.</p> <p>They built that business while Beijing threatened for decades to enforce the ruling Communist Party's claim to the island by attacking.</p> <p>Two-way trade soared 26% last year to \$328.3 billion. Taiwan, which produces half the world's processor chips and has technology the mainland can't match, said sales to Chinese factories rose 24.4% to \$104.3 billion.</p> <p>“The global economy cannot function without chips that are made in either Taiwan or China,” said Carl B. Weinberg of High-Frequency Economics in a report.</p> <p>On Wednesday, Beijing blocked imports of citrus fruits and frozen mackerel from Taiwan after Pelosi, speaker of the House of Representatives, arrived in Taiwan late Tuesday. But the ruling party avoided disrupting the flow of chips and other industrial components, a step that would send shock waves through the shaky global economy.</p> <p>Beijing also announced four days of military exercises with artillery fire in waters around Taiwan. That might delay or disrupt shipping to and from the island, one of the biggest global traders.</p> <p>The potential disruption adds to concerns over weakening global economic growth, but Asian stock markets rose Wednesday after there was no immediate sign of Chinese military action.</p> <p>The Communist Party says Pelosi's visit might embolden Taiwan to make its decades-old de facto independence permanent. Beijing says that would lead to war.</p> <p>The administration of U.S. President Joe Biden has sought to tone down the volume on the visit, insisting there's no change in America's longstanding “one-China policy,” which recognizes Beijing but allows informal relations and defense ties with Taipei.</p>

Meeting leaders in Taiwan, Pelosi said she and other members of Congress in a visiting delegation were showing they will not abandon their commitment to the self-governing island.

"America's determination to preserve democracy, here in Taiwan and around the world, remains ironclad," Pelosi said in a short speech during a meeting with Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen.

"Facing deliberately heightened military threats, Taiwan will not back down," Tsai said.

The ban on imports of citrus fruits and frozen mackerel will hurt suppliers seen as Tsai's supporters.

Taiwan plays an outsized role in the chip industry for an island of 15 million people, accounting for more than half the global supply.

Its producers including Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp. make the most advanced processors for smartphones, tablet computers, medical devices and other products. Taiwan says chip sales to China factories rose 24.4% last year to \$104.3 billion.

Beijing has invested billions of dollars in developing its own industry, which supplies low-end chips for autos and appliances but cannot support the latest smartphones, tablet computers, medical devices and other products.

Chips are China's biggest import at more than \$400 billion a year, ahead of crude oil.

That concentration has fueled concern in the United States and Europe about relying too heavily on supplies that might be disrupted by conflict. The U.S. government is trying to expand its domestic chip production capacity.

Overall, China is Taiwan's biggest trading partner, taking more than twice as much of its exports as the United States, the island's No. 2 foreign market.

Beijing has tried to use access to its markets to undermine Tsai and other Taiwanese leaders it accuses of pursuing independence.

The customs agency blocked imports of cookies and other food products from more than 100 Taiwanese suppliers on Monday ahead of Pelosi's visit, according to the Global Times and other Chinese news outlets. There was no official announcement.

The Communist Party also has used military action in the past to try to hurt Taiwanese leaders by disrupting the island's economy.

The mainland tried to drive voters away from then-President Lee Teng-hui ahead of the island's first direct presidential elections in 1996 by firing missiles into shipping lanes.

That forced shippers to cancel voyages and raised insurance costs but backfired by allowing Lee to brag about standing up to Beijing in front of cheering supporters. Lee won the four-way election with 54% of the vote.

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HEADLINE	08/03 Europe saves as Russia gas wanes
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/cold-showers-lights-europe-saves-russian-gas-wanes-87857877">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/cold-showers-lights-europe-saves-russian-gas-wanes-87857877</a>
GIST	PARIS -- Fanning out like urban guerrillas through Paris' darkened streets well after midnight, the anti-waste activists shinny up walls and drain pipes, reaching for switches to turn off the lights.

Click. Click. Click.

One by one, the outdoor lights that stores had left on are extinguished. It's one small but symbolic step in a giant leap of energy saving that Europe is trying to make as it rushes to wean itself off natural gas and oil from Russia so factories aren't forced to close and homes stay heated and powered.

Engineer Kevin Ha and his equally nimble friends had been acting against wasteful businesses in Paris long before Russia started cutting energy supplies to Europe in a battle of wills over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. As such, the campaigners were precursors of the energy economy drive becoming all the rage in France, Germany and elsewhere. Their message — that everyone can contribute — is almost word-for-word what public officials from cabinet ministers to mayors are saying now, too.

“Everyone can have a positive impact at their own level, by adopting good practices, by doing the right things to reduce their overall energy footprint,” the 30-year-old Ha said on a recent night of light-extinguishing on the Champs-Élysées boulevard.

The stakes are high. If Russia severs the supplies of gas it has already drastically reduced, authorities fear Europe risks becoming a colder, darker and less-productive place this winter. It's imperative to economize gas now so it can be squirreled away for burning later in homes, factories and power plants, officials say.

“Europe needs to be ready,” said European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. “To make it through the winter, assuming that there is a full disruption of Russian gas, we need to save gas to fill our gas storages faster. And to do so, we have to reduce our gas consumption. I know that this is a big ask for the whole of the European Union, but it is necessary to protect us.”

And although Europe is scrambling to get energy from elsewhere, any difficulties this winter could be a harbinger of worse to come if Russian gas supplies are completely severed and stay off through 2023, said France's minister overseeing energy, Agnès Pannier-Runacher.

“If gas deliveries are cut by the end of the year, that will mean we'll have a full year without Russian gas, so the following winter could be even harder,” Pannier-Runacher told French senators.

Hence the mounting appeals — already familiar to exasperated parents of wasteful teenagers everywhere — for Europeans to take shorter showers, switch off power sockets and otherwise do what they can.

Germany had been getting about a third of its gas from Russia, making the EU's biggest economy and most populous nation conspicuously vulnerable. Energy saving is in full swing, with lights going off, public pools becoming chillier and thermostats being adjusted.

The glass dome of the Reichstag, the parliament building in Berlin, is going dark after it closes to visitors at midnight, and two facades will no longer be lit. Legislators' office temperatures will drop by 2 degrees to 20 Celsius (68 Fahrenheit) this winter. Berlin City Hall, the Jewish Museum, two opera houses and the landmark Victory Column with panoramic views are among about 200 sites in the German capital that will no longer be lit at night.

Saunas are closing in Munich's municipal swimming pools, which have chillier water now, too. There'll only be cold showers at public pools in Hannover, part of a plan by the northern city to cut its energy use by 15%.

“The sum of all the contributions will help us get through this winter and be prepared for the next one,” said Robert Habeck, Germany's vice chancellor and economy minister. He also told news weekly Der Spiegel he has slashed the time he spends showering.

“It will be a demanding, stony road, but we can manage it,” he said.



With a campaign dubbed “Flip the Switch,” the Netherlands' government is urging showers of no more than five minutes, using sun shades and fans instead of air conditioning, and air-drying laundry.

Under a law passed Monday in often-swelting Spain, offices, stores and hospitality venues will no longer be allowed to set their thermostats below 27 degrees Celsius (81 degrees Fahrenheit) in summer, nor raise them above 19 degrees Celsius in winter.

Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez asked office workers to ditch neckties, presumably to lessen the temptation to use air conditioning. He led by example, appearing at a news conference in an open-necked shirt.

The Italian government also is recommending limits on heating and cooling in public buildings.

In France, the government is targeting a 10% reduction in energy use by 2024, with an “energy sobriety” drive. Mayors are also waging their own war on waste, with fines introduced for air-conditioned or heated stores that leave front doors open; others are working to limit the pain of soaring energy prices.

The 8,000 residents of Aureilhan, in the foothills of the Pyrenees in southwestern France, have been adjusting to nights without street lights since July 11. Extinguishing all 1,770 of them from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. will save money that Mayor Yannick Boubée would rather spend on roads and other maintenance. Otherwise, he said, the town's 84,000-euro (\$86,000) lighting bill in 2021 was on course to nearly triple next year.

“When it comes down to it, there’s no reason to keep the lights on at night,” he said by phone. “It is shaking up our way of thinking.”

Next will be convincing townspeople to agree to less-heated classrooms when schools reopen.

“We’re going to ask parents to put a pullover on their children, all measures that don’t cost anything,” he said. “We have no choice, unfortunately.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/03 Russia FM official visit to Myanmar</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/russias-foreign-minister-makes-official-visit-myanmar-87855546">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/russias-foreign-minister-makes-official-visit-myanmar-87855546</a>
GIST	<p>BANGKOK -- Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov arrived Wednesday in Myanmar for an official visit that Moscow said will include discussions with the military government on security and economic issues, the Russian news agency TASS reported.</p> <p>Russia is a major supporter of Myanmar’s military government, which came to power in February last year when it ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.</p> <p>Lavrov met with his counterpart, Wunna Maung Lwin, and other top Myanmar officials shortly after his arrival in the capital, Naypyitaw, Russia's Foreign Ministry wrote on Twitter.</p> <p>Western nations have ostracized Myanmar's ruling generals and maintain economic and political sanctions against them because of their takeover and violent repression of opposition.</p> <p>Lavrov’s visit, his first to Myanmar, comes ahead of his attendance at a meeting of foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, hosted by Cambodia this week.</p> <p>Myanmar has been in a state of increasing turmoil since the army takeover last year, and its military regularly carries out attacks on armed pro-democracy militants and their supporters and ethnic minority militias that have long battled for greater political autonomy. U.N. experts have described the country as being in a civil war.</p>

	<p>Russia is Myanmar's top arms supplier, despite calls from many other nations for an arms embargo. Russian-made fighter jets are used in attacks on territory under the control of ethnic minority groups.</p> <p>Russia and China, the ruling military's other major ally, have been able to stymie coordinated international sanctions because of the veto power they hold as members of the U.N. Security Council.</p> <p>The failure of Myanmar's generals to make efforts to restore peace and democracy in their country is expected to be a major issue at this week's ASEAN meeting. Myanmar is one of ASEAN's 10 members but has failed to implement the group's plan to ease the crisis.</p> <p>Russia's foreign ministry announced Tuesday that Lavrov would meet with his counterpart, Wunna Maung Lwin, and other members of Myanmar's leadership.</p> <p>Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said the two sides will discuss the prospects for the entire complex of Russia-Myanmar relations: political dialogue, trade and economic cooperation, defense and security, and humanitarian ties.</p> <p>Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, who heads Myanmar's ruling military council, has visited Russia twice since taking power. There have also been exchanges of defense delegations of both countries.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Clallam Co. a bellwether for nation's mood?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/washington-county-bellwether-nations-political-mood/story?id=87803821">https://abcnews.go.com/US/washington-county-bellwether-nations-political-mood/story?id=87803821</a>
GIST	<p>Clallam County, Washington, may not be a location that's been in the spotlight, but the area, located in the northwestern section of the state, carries a one-of-a-kind distinction in the political world.</p> <p>Since 1980, Clallam has been the only county in the nation that has voted for the winning candidate in every presidential election.</p> <p>Some residents and elected officials told ABC News that they not only think their town will continue the trend in the next presidential election, but also be a bellwether for this year's midterm elections.</p> <p>And while those residents cannot fully predict if their town or the nation will be shifting toward one political side or the other, many there hope other parts of the country can emulate their efforts to overcome differences and work together.</p> <p>"We're not always able to reduce the temperature, but...we try and work with each other...on practical solutions," Mark Ozias, a Clallam County, Washington, commissioner told ABC News last month.</p> <p>ABC News visited the county shortly after Joe Biden won the presidential election in 2020 and spoke with voters who went Democrat on the ballot.</p> <p>When asked about 2024 predictions, Alan Turner, who owns a bookstore in the county and is a registered Independent, told ABC News that he has concerns about Biden and his party and fears a red wave is coming.</p> <p>"I don't think young people are going to come out for him," Turner, who is a self-described "Democratic socialist," told ABC News last month. "His rhetoric and his delivery don't seem to match the significance of the moment."</p> <p>Young Johnson, a restaurant owner who voted for Obama twice and then Trump, told ABC News last month that Biden shouldn't run again in 2024 and that she thinks sentiment is going to fuel a "red wave" this fall. Johnson said the economy is the top issue on her mind, because of the hardships her business has faced recently.</p>

"We've had to simplify things because of labor as well as the product," she told ABC News.

Clallam County's leaders told ABC News that those issues resonate with constituents of all political backgrounds.

Clallam County commissioners Bill Peach, a Republican, Randy Johnson, an Independent, and Ozias, a Democrat, told ABC News that rising gas prices, housing issues and affordability are topics that weighed heavily on the community.

"Increases in the cost of gasoline cause people to stand back and say, 'Well, do I really need that?' And, in some cases, it's a real heartbreak," Peach told ABC News.

Despite the economic woes and changing political temperature, some Clallam County leaders said they have worked hard to make sure that the community remains civil during the season.

In 2020, the independent community of Sequim was shocked after its mayor, William Armacost, shared baseless QAnon conspiracies on a local radio show. He did not apologize or take back his comments.

That spurred the creation of the "Sequim Good Governance League," in 2021 to support "transparency, reasoned dialogue and respect for individuals within the city administration."

The group endorsed candidates for the 2021 city elections including Democrat Vicki Lowe for and Republican Brandon Janisse.

"I would knock on doors and I would say, 'Hi, my name's Vicki, I'm running for Sequim City Council.' And they'd say, 'I know who you are. Can you get rid of the mayor?' Literally, that's what people said," Lowe told ABC News.

Sequim's government is run in a Council-Manager form where the mayor is chosen by the council members.

Lowe and Janisse both went on to win their Council seats, along with three other Sequim Good Governance League-backed candidates. Armacost was voted out of his mayoral role by the council in January and was the only councilor to vote in favor of himself, according to city records.

Lowe and Janisse, who was chosen by the Council to serve as the city's the deputy mayor, told ABC News that even though they may not see eye to eye on policies, they have made it their mission to restore civility and reason to city leadership.

"You got to be an adult," Janisse told ABC News. "[Vicki and I] and aren't going to agree with everything and everything, but no ill will toward her because it serves no purpose."

And as the country watches how Clallam County will vote this November and in 2024, its leaders say they hope Americans can also take a page from their efforts and camaraderie despite the political differences.

"If that ends up having some carryover into the way that people think beyond their local elections, then I would think that that would be good," Ozias said.

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HEADLINE	08/02 Calif. wildfire wipes out scenic river town
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/deadly-california-wildfire-wipes-scenic-river-town-87853130">https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/deadly-california-wildfire-wipes-scenic-river-town-87853130</a>
GIST	KLAMATH RIVER, Calif. -- Roger Derry, 80, and his son have lived together in the tiny scenic hamlet of Klamath River in Northern California for more than 40 years.  They know most of the town's 200 or so residents.

Now, they're one of the few families left after California's largest and deadliest wildfire of the year raged through the modest homes and stores of the riverside town.

"It's very sad. It's very disheartening," Derry said. "Some of our oldest homes, 100-year-old homes, are gone. It's a small community. Good people, good folks, for the most part, live here and in time will rebuild. But it's going to take some time now."

The McKinney Fire that erupted last Friday remained out of control, despite some progress as firefighters took advantage of thunderstorms that dumped rain that temporarily took a bit of heat out of the parched, scorched region not far from the Oregon border.

The area saw another thunderstorm Tuesday that dumped heavy rain and swelled rivers.

The fire has burned more than 88 square miles (228 square kilometers), and is the largest of several wildfires burning in the Klamath National Forest.

The fire didn't grow on Tuesday, and fire officials said crews were able to use bulldozers to carve firebreaks along a ridge to protect homes and buildings in the county seat of Yreka.

But several thousand people remained under evacuation orders, 100 buildings ranging from homes to greenhouses have burned and at least four bodies have been found in the region.

The destruction of a small community has sadly become a real possibility as wildfires become fiercer in the Western United States.

Wildfires in Montana, Idaho and Nebraska have destroyed some homes and continue to threaten communities.

Just four years ago, a massive blaze in the Sierra Nevada foothills of California virtually razed the Butte County town of Paradise, killing 85 people.

Scientists have said climate change has made the West warmer and drier over the last three decades and will continue to make weather more extreme and wildfires more frequent and destructive.

When it began, the McKinney Fire was only a couple hundred acres and firefighters thought they would quickly have it under control. But then, a thunderstorm cell came in with ferocious wind gusts that within hours had pushed it into an unstoppable conflagration.

Roger Derry and his son, whose name is spelled Rodger Derry, decided not to evacuate when the fire broke out and said their home, which they'd tried to safeguard by trimming away nearby bushes, survived. Firefighters also showed up and dug firebreaks around the neighborhood.

But they could see the fire as it tore its way through the places around them.

"When that fire came over that ridgeline, it had 100-foot flames for about 5 miles and the wind was blowing. It was coming down like a solid blowtorch," Roger Derry said. "There was nothing to stop it,"

The fire destroyed most of the homes, including those in a trailer park, along with the post office, community hall and other scattered businesses.

The cause hasn't been determined.

In northwestern Montana, a fire that started Friday near the town of Elmo on the Flathead Indian Reservation has burned some structures, but authorities said they didn't immediately know if any were

	<p>homes. The blaze measured 25 square miles (66 square kilometers) on Tuesday, with 10% containment, fire officials said. Some residents were forced to flee Monday as gusting afternoon winds drove the fire.</p> <p>The Moose Fire in Idaho has burned more than 85 square miles (220 square kilometers) in the Salmon-Challis National Forest while threatening homes, mining operations and fisheries near the town of Salmon. It was 23% contained Tuesday, according to the National Interagency Coordination Center.</p> <p>And a wildfire raging in northwestern Nebraska led to evacuations and destroyed or damaged several homes near the small city of Gering. The Carter Canyon Fire began Saturday as two separate fires that merged. It was more than 30% contained by Tuesday.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Pelosi arrives in Taiwan defying Beijing</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/china-asia-beijing-malaysia-a5a6acc391511c99b1b4c2d69e67b133">https://apnews.com/article/china-asia-beijing-malaysia-a5a6acc391511c99b1b4c2d69e67b133</a>
GIST	<p>TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi arrived in Taiwan late Tuesday, becoming the highest-ranking American official in 25 years to visit the self-ruled island claimed by China, which quickly announced that it would conduct military maneuvers in retaliation for her presence.</p> <p>Pelosi flew in aboard a U.S. Air Force passenger jet and was greeted on the tarmac at Taipei's international airport by Taiwan's foreign minister and other Taiwanese and American officials. She posed for photos before her motorcade whisked her unseen into the parking garage of a hotel.</p> <p>Her visit ratcheted up tension between China and the United States because China claims Taiwan as part of its territory, and it views visits by foreign government officials as recognition of the island's sovereignty.</p> <p>The Biden administration, and Pelosi, say the United States remains committed to the so-called one-China policy, which recognizes Beijing but allows informal relations and defense ties with Taipei.</p> <p>The speaker framed the trip as part of a broader mission at a time when "the world faces a choice between autocracy and democracy." Her visit comes after she led a congressional delegation to the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv in the spring, and it serves as a capstone to her many years of promoting democracy abroad.</p> <p>"We must stand by Taiwan," she said in an opinion piece published by The Washington Post on her arrival in Taiwan. She cited the commitment that the U.S. made to a democratic Taiwan under a 1979 law.</p> <p>"It is essential that America and our allies make clear that we never give in to autocrats," she wrote.</p> <p>Taiwan and China split during a civil war in 1949, but China claims the island as its own territory and has not ruled out using military force to take it.</p> <p>The Biden administration did not explicitly urge Pelosi to call off her plans. It repeatedly and publicly assured Beijing that the visit did not signal any change in U.S. policy toward Taiwan.</p> <p>Soon after Pelosi's arrival, China announced a series of military operations and drills, which followed promises of "resolute and strong measures" if Pelosi went through with her visit.</p> <p>The People's Liberation Army said the maneuvers would take place in the waters and skies near Taiwan and include the firing of long-range ammunition in the Taiwan Strait.</p> <p>"This action is a solemn deterrent against the recent major escalation of the negative actions of the United States on the Taiwan issue, and a serious warning to the 'Taiwan independence' forces seeking 'independence.'"</p>

China's official Xinhua News said the army planned to conduct live-fire drills from Aug. 4 to Aug. 7 across multiple locations. An image released by the news agency indicated that the drills were to take place in six different areas in the waters surrounding Taiwan.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Washington's betrayal "on the Taiwan issue is bankrupting its national credibility."

"Some American politicians are playing with fire on the issue of Taiwan," Wang said in a statement that referred to the U.S. as "the world's biggest saboteur of peace."

Back in the United States, 26 Republican lawmakers issued a statement of rare bipartisan support for the Democratic speaker. The statement called trips by members of Congress to Taiwan routine.

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell backed Pelosi's visit as a display of support for Taiwan's democracy and said any allegations that her itinerary was provocative were "utterly absurd."

"I believe she has every right to go," McConnell said in a Senate speech.

Senators are considering legislation to bolster Taiwan's defense as direct response to China's rhetoric. The Taiwan Policy Act, which has support from both parties, will be discussed Wednesday by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The package would bolster Taiwan's defense capabilities with nearly \$4.5 billion in security assistance over the next four years and provide other support for Taiwan's democratic government and civil society. The measure would also designate Taiwan as a "major non-NATO ally," which opens the door to more security and trade benefits.

Backers call it the most comprehensive restructuring of U.S. policy toward Taiwan since the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979.

Pelosi's trip was not officially announced ahead of time.

Barricades were erected outside the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Taipei. Journalists and onlookers thronged the streets just outside and pressed against the hotel's lobby windows as they awaited Pelosi's motorcade. Two buildings in the capital lit up LED displays with words of welcome, including the iconic Taipei 101 building, which said "Welcome to Taiwan, Speaker Pelosi."

China has stepped up overflights and other provocative moves toward Taiwan and neighboring territory in recent years, asserting broad claims of its rights around the region.

China's military threats have driven concerns about a new crisis in the 100-mile-wide (140-kilometer) Taiwan Strait that could roil global markets and supply chains.

The White House insisted that China had no valid cause for anger.

"The United States will not seek, and does not want, a crisis," John Kirby, spokesman for the National Security Council, told a White House briefing Tuesday. "At the same time, we will not engage in saber-rattling."

U.S. officials have said the American military will increase its movements in the Indo-Pacific region during Pelosi's visit. The aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan and its strike group were in the Philippine Sea on Monday, according to officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss military operations.

The Reagan, the cruiser USS Antietam and the destroyer USS Higgins left Singapore after a port visit and moved north to their home port in Japan.



Meanwhile, Taiwan's Defense Ministry said early Wednesday that China had sent 21 planes flying toward Taiwan, 18 of them fighter jets. The rest included an early warning plane and an electronic warfare plane.

Beijing sees official American contact with Taiwan as encouragement to make the island's decades-old de facto independence permanent, a step U.S. leaders say they don't support. Pelosi, head of one of three branches of the U.S. government, is the highest-ranking elected American official to visit Taiwan since then-Speaker Newt Gingrich in 1997.

Pelosi's aircraft, an Air Force version of the Boeing 737, took a roundabout route, flying east over Indonesia rather than directly over the South China Sea.

The speaker has long challenged China on human rights, including traveling to Tiananmen Square in 1991, two years after China crushed a wave of democracy protests.

In 2009, she hand-delivered a letter to then-President Hu Jintao calling for the release of political prisoners. She had sought to visit Taiwan's island democracy earlier this year before testing positive for COVID-19.

China has been steadily ratcheting up diplomatic and military pressure on Taiwan. China cut off all contact with Taiwan's government in 2016 after President Tsai Ing-wen refused to endorse its claim that the island and mainland together make up a single Chinese nation, with the communist regime in Beijing being the sole legitimate government.

Pelosi kicked off her Asian tour Monday in Singapore. She is to travel to Japan and South Korea later this week.

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## Cyber Awareness

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HEADLINE	08/02 Universities put email users at cyber risk
SOURCE	<a href="https://threatpost.com/universities-email-cyber-risk/180342/">https://threatpost.com/universities-email-cyber-risk/180342/</a>
GIST	<p>Top U.S. universities are among the worst in the world at protecting users from email fraud, lacking security measures to prevent common threat tactics such as domain <a href="#">spoofing</a> or other types of fraudulent emails, researchers have found.</p> <p>Ninety-seven percent of the <a href="#">top 10 universities</a> in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia are subjecting students, staff and administration to higher risks of <a href="#">email-based impersonation</a> and other attacks because their systems lack basic security, according <a href="#">to new research</a> from Proofpoint revealed Tuesday. Moreover, U.S. institutions are the worst offenders of the bunch, with some of the poorest levels of cybersecurity protection, researchers found.</p> <p>The news is troubling, especially as email remains the most common vector for security compromises across all industries, observed Ryan Kalember, executive vice president of cybersecurity strategy at Proofpoint, in a statement. Further, the frequency, sophistication, and cost of cyber attacks against universities has increased over the last years, he said.</p> <p>"It's the combination of these factors that make it especially concerning that the premier universities in the U.S. are currently the most vulnerable to attack," Kalember noted.</p> <p>Indeed, universities and other institutions of higher education store "masses of sensitive personal and financial data, perhaps more so than any industry outside healthcare," he said. This, unfortunately, makes</p>

them a top target for cybercriminals, who currently have an easy path to attack due to lack of email protections, he said.

### **Lacking in Email Protection**

Among universities in the United States, Proofpoint looked at Columbia, Harvard, Princeton, Yale and Stanford universities, the Universities of California Berkeley and Los Angeles, the University of Pennsylvania, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and New York University.

Researchers used Domain-based Message Authentication, Reporting and Conformance (DMARC) analysis of these universities as well as the top 10 in the United Kingdom and Australia to make their assessment.

DMARC is an email validation protocol aimed at protecting domain names from being misused by cybercriminals by authenticating the sender's identity before sending a message to its intended destination, researchers noted. This misuse can occur in cybercriminals impersonating an authentic entity by what's called "spoofing" its domain, which leads a recipient of an email to think it's legitimate when it's not.

DMARC has three levels of protection: monitor, quarantine and reject; the last is the most secure for preventing suspicious emails from reaching the inbox. Proofpoint found that none of the top U.S. and U.K. universities had a Reject policy in place that can actively block malicious emails from reaching their targets, leaving users of their email systems wide-open to email fraud.

While 65 percent of the top U.S. and U.K. universities—or 13 out of 20—did have a base level of DMARC protection to either monitor or quarantine emails, five of the top 10 U.S. universities did not publish any level of DMARC record, researchers found.

More specifically, 11 out of the 20 institutions investigated in the United States and United Kingdom have a Monitor policy in place, while only 2 have a Quarantine policy in place, they said. Across all the 30 universities observed, 17 of them (57 percent) implemented at least a Monitor policy, while four of them (13 percent) had at least a Quarantine policy, according to Proofpoint.

### **Universities in the Crosshairs**

Educational facilities have never been at the cutting edge of security, and new protocols such as remote classes held over the Zoom video platform and others put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic have only exacerbated the situation.

Indeed, with this new shift to remote learning and a hybrid model of in-person and online courses going forward, cyberattacks against universities will continue to climb, researchers said. Exploiting human error through socially engineered malicious emails is low-hanging fruit for cybercriminals, especially when there is no barrier to block these suspicious emails from reaching inbox of unsuspecting victims, according to Proofpoint.

Moreover, email is often a gateway for more dangerous attacks. One type of attack that can initiate as an email-related breach is ransomware, which has become a major thorn in the side of universities in recent years. In fact, one 157-year-old college—Illinois-based Lincoln College—even closed its doors recently due to a combination of pressures from the pandemic and a ransomware attack that pushed it to its breaking point.

One major issue that Proofpoint uncovered in its recent Voice of the CISO report is that CIOs in the education sector are feeling neglected by their respective organizations, without the support to implement security protections that could block the institutions from common threats, such as malicious emails, Kalember noted.

Without this support going forward—and without employing DMARC protections that can block malicious emails before they even reach a person's inbox—users will continue to get exposed to threats that can easily be avoided, he said.

	“People are a critical line of defense against email fraud but remain one of the biggest vulnerabilities for organizations,” Kalember said. “When fully compliant with DMARC, a malicious email can’t reach your inbox, removing the risk of human interference.”
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HEADLINE	<b>08/03 New large-scale AitM phishing attacks</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://thehackernews.com/2022/08/researchers-warns-of-large-scale-aitm.html">https://thehackernews.com/2022/08/researchers-warns-of-large-scale-aitm.html</a>
GIST	<p>A new, large-scale phishing campaign has been observed using adversary-in-the-middle (AitM) techniques to get around security protections and compromise enterprise email accounts.</p> <p>"It uses an adversary-in-the-middle (AitM) attack technique capable of bypassing multi-factor authentication," Zscaler researchers Sudeep Singh and Jagadeeswar Ramanukolanu <a href="#">said</a> in a Tuesday report. "The campaign is specifically designed to reach end users in enterprises that use Microsoft's email services."</p> <p>Prominent targets include fintech, lending, insurance, energy, manufacturing, and federal credit union verticals located in the U.S., U.K., New Zealand, and Australia.</p> <p>This is not the first time such a phishing attack has come to light. Last month, Microsoft <a href="#">disclosed</a> that over 10,000 organizations had been targeted since September 2021 by means of AitM techniques to breach accounts secured with multi-factor authentication (MFA).</p> <p>The ongoing campaign, effective June 2022, commences with an invoice-themed email sent to targets containing an HTML attachment, which includes a phishing URL embedded within it.</p> <p>Opening the attachment via a web browser redirects the email recipient to the phishing page that masquerades as a login page for Microsoft Office, but not before fingerprinting the compromised machine to determine whether the victim is actually the intended target.</p> <p>AitM phishing attacks go beyond the traditional phishing approaches designed to plunder credentials from unwitting users, particularly in scenarios where MFA is enabled – a security barrier that prevents the attacker from logging into the account with only the stolen credentials.</p> <p>To circumvent this, the rogue landing page developed using a phishing kit functions as a proxy that captures and relays all the communication between the client (i.e., victim) and the email server.</p> <p>"The kits intercept the HTML content received from the Microsoft servers, and before relaying it back to the victim, the content is manipulated by the kit in various ways as needed, to make sure the phishing process works," the researchers said.</p> <p>This also entails replacing all the links to the Microsoft domains with equivalent links to the phishing domain so as to ensure that the back-and-forth remains intact with the fraudulent website throughout the session.</p> <p>Zscaler said it observed the attacker manually logging into the account eight minutes after the credential theft, following it up by reading emails and checking the user's profile information.</p> <p>What's more, in some instances, the hacked email inboxes are subsequently used to send additional phishing emails as part of the same campaign to conduct business email compromise (BEC) scams.</p> <p>"Even though security features such as multi-factor authentication (MFA) add an extra layer of security, they should not be considered as a silver bullet to protect against phishing attacks," the researchers noted.</p>

	"With the use of advanced phishing kits (AiTM) and clever evasion techniques, threat actors can bypass both traditional as well as advanced security solutions."
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Spain research center suffers cyberattack</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.securityweek.com/spanish-research-center-suffers-cyberattack-linked-russia">https://www.securityweek.com/spanish-research-center-suffers-cyberattack-linked-russia</a>
GIST	<p>Spain's leading scientific research body was targeted by a cyberattack that national authorities suspect had its origin in Russia, the country's science ministry said Tuesday.</p> <p>Spain's science ministry said the Spanish National Research Council was targeted by the ransomware attack on July 16-17.</p> <p>A preliminary analysis by Spain's cybersecurity authorities said that it appears that no sensitive or confidential information was extracted.</p> <p>In a statement, the ministry said that the cyberattack was similar to others carried out against NASA in the United States and the Max Planck Institute in Germany.</p> <p>Even though it appears the attack failed, the security protocols activated to ensure that it was unsuccessful have left several of the council's research centers off-line.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 German semiconductor firm ransomware hit</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/semiconductor-manufacturer-semikron-hit-by-lv-ransomware-attack/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/semiconductor-manufacturer-semikron-hit-by-lv-ransomware-attack/</a>
GIST	<p>German power electronics manufacturer Semikron has disclosed that it was hit by a ransomware attack that partially encrypted the company's network.</p> <p>Semikron has over 3,000 employees in 24 offices and 8 production sites worldwide across Germany, Brazil, China, France, India, Italy, Slovakia, and the USA, with a turnover of around \$461 million in 2020.</p> <p>It also says it's one of the world's leading power engineering component manufacturers, with 35% of the wind turbines installed each year operating with its technologies.</p> <p><b>LV ransomware attack</b></p> <p>"The SEMIKRON Group has been the victim of a cyber attack by a professional hacker group. As part of this attack, the perpetrators have claimed to have stolen data from our system," the company <a href="#">revealed</a> in a statement published Monday.</p> <p>"The attack has also led to partial encryption of our IT systems and files. The entire network is currently being studied and adjusted forensic."</p> <p>According to an alert issued by the German Federal Office for Information Security (Bundesamt für Sicherheit in der Informationstechnik) and seen by BleepingComputer, the ransomware operators are blackmailing the company and threatening to leak allegedly stolen data.</p> <p>While the company didn't share any information about the ransomware used in the incident, a ransom note deployed on one of the encrypted Semikron systems seen by BleepingComputer indicates it was an <a href="#">LV Ransomware</a> attack and says the attackers stole 2TB worth of documents.</p> <p><b>Claims of data theft under investigation</b></p> <p>Semikron is investigating attackers' claims that they stole data from the encrypted systems before encryption with the help of external cybersecurity and forensic experts.</p>

	<p>The company added that it also informed and collaborates with relevant authorities throughout the investigation and would alert customers and partners if any evidence of data theft is found.</p> <p>"At the same time, we are working on restoring the working ability to minimize disruptions for our employees, customers and contractual partners and to ensure the best possible security of our IT systems," Semikron added.</p> <p>"We are also supported by the competent authorities in the investigation and coordination of further measures."</p> <p>A Semikron spokesperson was not immediately available for comment when contacted by BleepingComputer earlier today.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 New Cobalt Strike-like attack framework</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/chinese-hackers-use-new-cobalt-strike-like-attack-framework/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/chinese-hackers-use-new-cobalt-strike-like-attack-framework/</a>
GIST	<p>Researchers have observed a new post-exploitation attack framework used in the wild, named Manjusaka, which can be deployed as an alternative to the widely abused Cobalt Strike toolset or parallel to it for redundancy.</p> <p>Manjusaka uses implants written in the cross-platform Rust programming language, while its binaries are written in the equally versatile GoLang.</p> <p>Its RAT (remote access trojan) implants support command execution, file access, network reconnaissance, and more, so hackers can use it for the same operational goals as Cobalt Strike.</p> <p><b>Campaign and discovery</b></p> <p>Manjusaka was discovered by researchers at Cisco Talos, who were called to investigate a Cobalt Strike infection on a customer, so the threat actors used both frameworks in that case.</p> <p>The infection came via a malicious document masquerading as a report about a COVID-19 case in Golmud City in Tibet for contact tracing.</p> <p>The document featured a VBA macro that executes through rundll32.exe to fetch a second-stage payload, Cobalt Strike, and load it in memory.</p> <p>However, instead of just using Cobalt Strike as their primary attack toolkit, they used it to download Manjusaka implants, which depending on the host's architecture, can be either EXE (Windows) or ELF files (Linux).</p> <p>"Cisco Talos recently discovered a new attack framework called "Manjusaka" being used in the wild that has the potential to become prevalent across the threat landscape. This framework is advertised as an imitation of the Cobalt Strike framework," warns the Cisco Talos researchers.</p> <p><b>Manjusaka capabilities</b></p> <p>Both Windows and Linux versions of the implant feature almost the same capabilities and implement similar communication mechanisms.</p> <p>The implants comprise a RAT and a file management module, each featuring distinct capabilities.</p> <p>The RAT supports arbitrary command execution via "cmd.exe", collects credentials stored in web browsers, WiFi SSID and passwords, and discovers network connections (TCP and UDP), account names, local groups, etc.</p>

Moreover, it can steal Premiumsoft Navicat credentials, capture screenshots of the current desktop, list running processes, and even check hardware specs and thermals.

The file management module can perform file enumeration, create directories, obtain full file paths, read or write file contents, delete files or directories, and move files between locations.

#### **A shift in tools**

Right now, it looks like Manjusaka is tentatively deployed in the wild for testing, so its development is likely not in its final phases. However, the new framework is already powerful enough for real-world use. Cisco notes that its researchers found a design diagram on a promotional post by the malware author, depicting components that weren't implemented in the sampled versions.

This means that they're not available in the "free" version used in the analyzed attack or haven't been completed by the author yet.

"This new attack framework contains all the features that one would expect from an implant, however, it is written in the most modern and portable programming languages.

The developer of the framework can easily integrate new target platforms like MacOSX or more exotic flavors of Linux as the ones running on embedded devices.

The fact that the developer made a fully functional version of the C2 available increases the chances of wider adoption of this framework by malicious actors." - [Cisco Talos](#)

The lure document is written in Chinese, and the same applies to the malware's C2 menus and configuration options, so it is safe to assume that its developers are based in China. Talos' OSINT narrowed their location to the Guangdong region.

If that's indeed the case, we might see Manjusaka deployed in the campaigns of multiple Chinese APTs soon, as threat groups from the country are known for [sharing a common toolset](#).

Recently, we reported about the rise of a post-exploitation toolkit named '[Brute Ratel](#),' which was also meant to replace the now aged and more easily detectable cracked versions of Cobalt Strike.

Threat actors are expected to continue moving away from Cobalt Strike gradually, and many alternative attack frameworks will likely appear, attempting to grow into the new market opportunity.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Hackers stole payment terminal passwords</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://techcrunch.com/2022/08/01/wiseasy-android-payment-passwords/?&amp;web_view=true">https://techcrunch.com/2022/08/01/wiseasy-android-payment-passwords/?&amp;web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>Hackers had access to dashboards used to remotely manage and control thousands of credit card payment terminals manufactured by digital payments giant Wiseasy, a cybersecurity startup told TechCrunch.</p> <p>Wiseasy is a brand you might not have heard of, but it's a popular Android-based payment terminal maker used in restaurants, hotels, retail outlets and schools across the Asia-Pacific region. Through its Wisecloud cloud service, Wiseasy can remotely manage, configure and update customer terminals over the internet.</p> <p>But Wiseasy employee passwords used for accessing Wiseasy's cloud dashboards — including an "admin" account — were found on a dark web marketplace actively used by cybercriminals, according to the startup.</p> <p>Youssef Mohamed, chief technology officer at pen-testing and dark web monitoring startup Buguard, told TechCrunch that the passwords were stolen by malware on the employee's computers. Mohamed said two cloud dashboards were exposed, but neither were protected with basic security features, like two-factor</p>



authentication, and allowed hackers to access nearly 140,000 Wiseasy payment terminals around the world.

Payment systems are frequently targeted by financially driven hackers with the aim of skimming credit card numbers for committing fraud.

Buguard said it first contacted Wiseasy about the compromised dashboards in early July, but efforts to disclose the compromise were met with meetings with executives that were later canceled without warning, and according to Mohamed, the company declined to say if or when the cloud dashboards would be secured.

Screenshots of the dashboards seen by TechCrunch show an “admin” user with remote access to Wiseasy payment terminals, including the ability to lock the device and remotely install and remove apps. The dashboard also allowed anyone to view names, phone numbers, email addresses and access permissions for Wiseasy dashboard users, including the ability to add new users.

Another dashboard view also shows the Wi-Fi name and plaintext password of the network that payment terminals are connected to.

Mohamed said anyone with access to the dashboards could control Wiseasy payment terminals and make configuration changes.

When reached by TechCrunch, Wiseasy chief executive Jason Wang would not comment. In a separate email from Wiseasy spokesperson Ocean An, the company confirmed that the issues were remediated and that it had added two-factor authentication to the dashboards.

It's not clear if the company plans to notify its customers of the security lapse.

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HEADLINE	08/02 DDoS attacks strike Taiwan websites
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/security/taiwanese-websites-hit-ddos-attacks-pelosi-begins-visit-rcna41144?&amp;web_view=true">https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/security/taiwanese-websites-hit-ddos-attacks-pelosi-begins-visit-rcna41144?&amp;web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>Key Taiwanese websites experienced intermittent outages Tuesday due to some minor cyberattacks just ahead of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's <a href="#">arrival in Taiwan</a>.</p> <p>The attacks hit at least four websites — those of President Tsai Ing-wen, the National Defense Ministry, the Foreign Affairs Ministry and the country's largest airport, Taiwan Taoyuan International.</p> <p>It wasn't clear where the cyberattacks came from. Their timing added to concerns over <a href="#">China's vehement opposition</a> to the visit by Pelosi, D-Calif.</p> <p>A spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in Washington didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.</p> <p>The website outages were the result of distributed denials of service, or DDoSes, in which hackers direct large swarms of computers to visit websites at the same time to overwhelm them with traffic and render them inaccessible.</p> <p>Cybersecurity experts consider DDoS attacks to be minor compared to other types of cyberattacks, as they require minimal skill or infrastructure to conduct, they tend not to do any lasting damage and they are relatively easy to conduct. Experts often have difficulty identifying the culprits, however.</p> <p>A spokesperson for Tsai <a href="#">said on Facebook</a> that the president's website had been the victim of a DDoS attack. Doug Madory, the direct of internet analysis at Kentik, a company that monitors website traffic, said he could see evidence of a DDoS attack on those intermittently inaccessible websites.</p>

	<p>“Big enough to be effective but not record-breaking,” Madory said in a text message.</p> <p>While state-sponsored hackers do sometimes conduct DDoS attacks, such attacks are also often the calling card of hacktivists, said John Hultquist, the vice president of intelligence analysis at the cybersecurity company Mandiant.</p> <p>“It is a way that nationalists of any background can express themselves. It doesn’t necessarily indicate any kind of broader coordination or any state actor,” Hultquist said.</p> <p>While China’s state hackers have conducted DDoS attacks in the past, they’re far more likely to conduct cyberespionage, Hultquist said. So far, his company has yet to see evidence of that related to Pelosi’s visit, he said.</p> <p>“Obviously we’re of course worried about espionage. I fully believe that the Chinese cyber espionage actors can figure out exactly what’s going on here,” he said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 EU missile maker confirms theft extortion</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/eu-missile-maker-mbda-confirms-data-theft-extortion-denies-breach/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/eu-missile-maker-mbda-confirms-data-theft-extortion-denies-breach/</a>
GIST	<p>MBDA, one of the largest missile developers and manufacturers in Europe, has responded to rumors about a cyberattack on its infrastructure saying that claims of a breach of its systems are false.</p> <p>A statement from the company clarifies that it was the target of a criminal group who spread the false news of hacking its information systems in an attempt to blackmail the organization into paying a ransom.</p> <p>The extortionists had acquired MBDA data from an external drive used by the company's Italian division and demanded a ransom to not leak or sell the files.</p> <p>“The origin of the data has already been ascertained, having been acquired from an external hard drive. It has been confirmed that no hacking of the company’s secure networks has occurred,” <a href="#">MBDA says</a>.</p> <p>“So far, the company’s internal verification processes indicate that the data made available online are neither classified data nor sensitive.”</p> <p>The firm doesn’t provide any explanation about how the extortionists got their hands onto the external hard drive from MBDA Italy.</p> <p>MBDA also added that they will not yield to the blackmail and won’t pay the ransom to the criminals. Instead, they will work with law enforcement authorities in Italy and take all legal actions against the perpetrators.</p> <p><b>The hacking claims</b></p> <p>On July 30, 2022, a hacking group called “Andrastea”, who describe themselves as a group of cybersecurity researchers, posted a claim on a popular hacking forum about breaching MBDA by leveraging critical network vulnerabilities.</p> <p>The hackers claimed that they had downloaded approximately 60 GB of data as a result of the intrusion, including information about MBDA’s employees, several classified military projects, technical schematics, contracts, agreements, and more.</p> <p>Andrastea shared samples of the stolen data as proof that the data they have is real.</p>

	<p>MBDA is a huge developer of missile systems that currently makes 45 missile types sold to 90 customers. Another 15 are now in development, including air-to-air, surface-to-air, air-to-surface, anti-ship, anti-tank, and multiple-launcher systems.</p> <p>The firm has an annual revenue of EUR 4.2 billion, with physical presence in France, Germany, Italy, the U.K., the U.S., and India, and 13,000 employees.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 How malware tricks users, antivirus</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/wolf-in-sheep-s-clothing-how-malware-tricks-users-and-antivirus/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/wolf-in-sheep-s-clothing-how-malware-tricks-users-and-antivirus/</a>
GIST	<p>One of the primary methods used by malware distributors to infect devices is by deceiving people into downloading and running malicious files, and to achieve this deception, malware authors are using a variety of tricks.</p> <p>Some of these tricks include masquerading malware executables as legitimate applications, signing them with valid certificates, or compromising trustworthy sites to use them as distribution points.</p> <p>According to VirusTotal, a security platform for scanning uploaded files for malware, some of these tricks are happening on a much larger scale than initially thought.</p> <p>The platform has compiled a report presenting stats from January 2021 until July 2022, based on the submission of two million files daily, illustrating trends in how malware is distributed.</p> <p><b>Abusing legitimate domains</b> Distributing malware through legitimate, popular, and high-ranking websites allows threat actors to evade IP-based blocklists, enjoy high availability, and provide a greater level of trust.</p> <p>VirusTotal detected 2.5 million suspicious files downloaded from 101 domains belonging to Alexa's top 1,000 websites.</p> <p>The most notable abuse case is Discord, which has become a <a href="#">hotbed of malware distribution</a>, with hosting service and cloud service providers Squarespace and Amazon also logging large numbers.</p> <p><b>Disguised as popular software</b> Masquerading a malware executable as a legitimate, popular application has seen an upward trend in 2022.</p> <p>Victims download these files thinking they're getting the applications they need, but upon running the installers, they infect their systems with malware.</p> <p>The most mimicked applications (by icon) are Skype, Adobe Acrobat, VLC, and 7zip.</p> <p>The popular Windows optimization program CCleaner that we saw in a <a href="#">recent SEO poisoning campaign</a> is among the hackers' prominent choices and features an exceptionally high infection ratio for its distribution volume.</p> <p><b>Lacing legitimate installers</b> Finally, there's the trick of hiding malware inside legitimate application installers and running the infection process in the background while the real apps execute in the foreground.</p> <p>This process helps in tricking the victims and also evades some antivirus engines that don't scrutinize PR resource structure and content in executables.</p> <p>Based on VirusTotal stats, this practice also appears to be on the rise this year, using Google Chrome, Malwarebytes, Windows Updates, Zoom, Brave, Firefox, ProtonVPN, and Telegram as lures.</p>

	<p><b>How to stay safe</b></p> <p>When looking to download software, either uses your OS's built-in app store or visit the application's official download page. Also, beware of promoted ads on search results that may rank higher as they can <a href="#">easily be spoofed to look like legitimate sites</a>.</p> <p>After downloading an installer, always perform an AV scan on the file before executing it to ensure they are not malware in disguise.</p> <p>Finally, avoid using torrent sites for cracks or keygens for copyrighted software, as they commonly lead to a malware infection.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Threat actors mimic legitimate apps</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.darkreading.com/vulnerabilities-threats/virustotal-threat-actors-mimic-legitimate-apps-use-stolen-certs-to-spread-malware">https://www.darkreading.com/vulnerabilities-threats/virustotal-threat-actors-mimic-legitimate-apps-use-stolen-certs-to-spread-malware</a>
GIST	<p>A study of malware submitted to VirusTotal shows cybercriminals and other threat actors are deploying a variety of abuse-of-trust approaches to spread malware and to dodge traditional defenses, often exploiting the implicit trust between a reputable software supplier and the user.</p> <p>Google Cloud's VirusTotal research team uncovered popular methods including the use of legitimate distribution channels to distribute malware and mimicking legitimate applications. By distributing malware through legitimate domains, malware can often slip through traditional perimeter defenses, including domain or IP-based firewalls — the report says that 10% of the top 1,000 Alexa domains have distributed suspicious samples.</p> <p>In total, Google found more than 2 million suspicious files downloaded from legitimate Alexa domains, including domains regularly used for file distribution. Another attack vector is the theft of legitimate signing certificates from legitimate software makers, which are then used to sign the malware. Since 2021, more than 1 million signed samples were considered as suspicious, according to a new report from the Google team.</p> <p>Even when multiple samples used invalid or revoked certificates, victims often failed to confirm the validity of the certificates. Nearly 13% of the samples didn't have a valid signature when they were uploaded for the first time to VirusTotal, and more than 99% of them were Windows Portable Executable or DLL files, according to the report.</p> <p>"We were surprised at how many signed malware samples we found, many of them appearing as valid at the time of the analysis," says Vicente Diaz, a VirusTotal security engineer. "Unfortunately, the process of checking if a signed file is valid is not trivial and can be abused by malware to avoid different security measures or, once again, abuse the victim's trust."</p> <p>This is especially worrisome in the case of attackers stealing legitimate certificates, which potentially creates a perfect scenario for <a href="#">supply chain attacks</a>. Attackers are increasingly deploying malware disguised as legitimate software, a basic social engineering success gaining traction. When using this method, the application's icon, recognized and accepted by the victim, is used to convince them the app is legitimate.</p> <p>"Most of the time, we saw this technique being abused by attackers in relatively simple attacks, with legitimate software being a decoy for the victim," Diaz says. "In other words, this means installing both the malware and the software that the victim thought they were legitimately installing."</p> <p>He explains that despite its simplicity, this technique can still be effective and avoid raising the alarm for the victim. "We also believe this might be a growing trend as some channels seem to be gaining popularity as malware distribution vectors, including distribution of cracked software and similar — which makes a perfect scenario for these kinds of attacks," Diaz says.</p>

The popular VoIP platform Skype, Adobe Acrobat, and media player VLC comprised the top three most mirrored app icons, according to the report. "Adobe Acrobat, Skype and 7zip are very popular and have the highest infection ratio, which probably makes them the top three applications and icons to be aware of from a social engineering perspective," the report notes.

Diaz says it's unclear why [attackers](#) are choosing that software — other than its popularity. "That could also be circumstantial based on specific campaigns leveraging these applications," he says. "Our belief is that attackers regularly rotate mirrored software based on popularity, campaigns, or other circumstances — and we will be monitoring its future evolution."

The VirusTotal team conducted a similar analysis on URLs using website icon similarity, finding WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and iCloud to be the top four most abused websites by several different URLs suspected of being malicious. Considering the growing trend of visually mimicking legitimate apps, the research team says it plans continued analysis of the most frequently targeted apps.

### **Bypassing Security Awareness**

Diaz explains the abuse of these legitimate resources seems to be an effort by attackers to override what has been taught to users — such as checking that a linked domain is legitimate, making sure what you are installing has the expected icon and that the executable is signed.

"This seems like a natural trend to bypass some basic precautions from the user and some simple security measures, such as blocking some domains," he says. "I don't necessarily think that attackers will be changing their tactics a lot — they are simply adjusting their defenses and distribution channels accordingly."

He adds that it is interesting to note the increase of attackers abusing legitimate distribution channels and top domains using either encrypted content or multicomponent artifacts that are hard to identify as malicious on their own.

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HEADLINE	08/02 Hackers drain \$200M from crypto startup
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnbc.com/2022/08/02/hackers-drain-nearly-200-million-from-crypto-startup-nomad.html">https://www.cnbc.com/2022/08/02/hackers-drain-nearly-200-million-from-crypto-startup-nomad.html</a>
GIST	<p>Hackers drained almost \$200 million in cryptocurrency from Nomad, a tool that lets users swap tokens from one blockchain to another, in yet another attack highlighting weaknesses in the decentralized finance space.</p> <p>Nomad acknowledged the exploit in a tweet late Monday.</p> <p>“We are aware of the incident involving the Nomad token bridge,” the startup said. “We are currently investigating and will provide updates when we have them.”</p> <p>It’s not entirely clear how the attack was orchestrated, or if Nomad plans to reimburse users who lost tokens in the attack. The company, which markets itself as a “secure cross-chain messaging” service, wasn’t immediately available for comment when contacted by CNBC.</p> <p>Blockchain security experts described the exploit as a “free-for-all.” Anyone with knowledge of the exploit and how it worked could seize on the flaw and withdraw an amount of tokens from Nomad — sort of like a cash machine spewing out money at the tap of a button.</p> <p>It started with an upgrade to Nomad’s code. One part of the code was marked as valid whenever users decided to initiate a transfer, which allowed thieves to withdraw more assets than were deposited into the platform. Once other attackers cottoned on to what was going on, they deployed armies of bots to carry out copycat attacks.</p>

“Without prior programming experience, any user could simply copy the original attackers’ transaction call data and substitute the address with theirs to exploit the protocol,” said Victor Young, founder and chief architect of crypto startup Analog.

“Unlike previous attacks, the Nomad hack became a free-for-all where multiple users started to drain the network by simply replaying the original attackers’ transaction call data.”

Sam Sun, research partner at crypto-focused investment firm Paradigm, [described](#) the exploit as “one of the most chaotic hacks that Web3 has ever seen” — Web3 being a hypothetical future iteration of the internet built around blockchain technology.

Nomad is what’s known as a “bridge,” a tool that lets users exchange tokens and information between different crypto networks. They’re used as an alternative to making transactions directly on a blockchain like [Ethereum](#), which can charge users high processing fees when there’s lots of activity happening at once.

Instances of vulnerabilities and poor design have made bridges a prime target for hackers seeking to swindle investors out of millions. More than \$1 billion in crypto assets has been stolen through bridge exploits so far in 2022, according to a report from crypto compliance firm Elliptic.

In April, a blockchain bridge called Ronin was exploited in a [\\$600 million crypto heist](#), which U.S. officials have since attributed to the North Korean state. Some months later, Harmony, another bridge, was drained of \$100 million in a similar attack.

Like Ronin and Harmony, Nomad was targeted through a flaw in its code — but there were a few differences. With those attacks, hackers were able to retrieve the private keys needed to gain control over the network and start moving out tokens. In Nomad’s case, it was much simpler than that. A routine update to the bridge enabled users to forge transactions and make off with millions’ worth of crypto.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Pentagon deleted texts after Jan 6 riot</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/pentagon-deleted-texts-key-trump-officials-jan-watchdog/story?id=87834121">https://abcnews.go.com/US/pentagon-deleted-texts-key-trump-officials-jan-watchdog/story?id=87834121</a>
GIST	<p>A government watchdog group said Tuesday that the Pentagon "wiped" text messages from the cell phones of key Trump administration Defense Department officials after the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol, and is now urging Attorney General Merrick Garland to launch a "cross-agency investigation into the possible destruction of federal records."</p> <p>American Oversight, which describes itself as a nonprofit watchdog that uses public records requests to fight corruption, filed several Freedom of Information Act requests within days of Jan. 6, 2021, seeking text messages and other communications among senior Pentagon officials including acting Defense Secretary Chris Miller, his chief of staff, Kash Patel, and Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy.</p> <p>In March, the Pentagon filed <a href="#">court documents</a> acknowledging that text messages belonging to those individuals had been deleted -- but framed that action as standard operating procedure whenever an employee leaves the department.</p> <p>"When an employee separates from DOD or Army he or she turns in the government-issued phone, and the phone is wiped," the Pentagon wrote in response to American Oversight's FOIA lawsuit. "For custodians no longer with the agency, the text messages were not preserved and therefore could not be searched."</p> <p>But in their <a href="#">letter to Garland</a> on Tuesday, American Oversight accused the Pentagon of knowingly erasing records under active FOIA -- and framed this deletion as another effort by these agencies to obscure the actions of administration officials.</p>



	<p>"In short, DOD has apparently deleted messages from top DOD and Army officials responsive to pending FOIA requests that could have shed light on the actions of top Trump administration officials on the day of the failed insurrection," American Oversight Executive Director Heather Sawyer wrote.</p> <p>Sawyer urged Garland to probe not only the Pentagon's conduct, but also the U.S. Secret Service's <a href="#">apparent deletion</a> of their agents' text messages.</p> <p>"American Oversight accordingly urges you to investigate DOD's actions in allowing the destruction of records potentially relevant to this significant matter of national attention and historical importance," the letter said.</p> <p>Reached for comment, Army spokesperson Col. Cathy Wilkinson told ABC News, "It is our policy not to comment on ongoing litigation."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Charming Kitten adds new tools, tactics</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://cyware.com/news/charming-kitten-apt-adds-new-tools-and-tactics-to-its-arsenal-90a5f2fc">https://cyware.com/news/charming-kitten-apt-adds-new-tools-and-tactics-to-its-arsenal-90a5f2fc</a>
GIST	<p>Charming Kitten, also referred to as Phosphorous and UNC788, is an Iran-based threat actor group that has been active since 2012. It is one of the most active and persistent threat actors that primarily relies on impersonating log-in pages of legitimate webmail services to collect credentials from its targets. Despite being consistent for over a decade, the group also has a history of operational security (OpSec) errors that disclosed its tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). This includes the malware used by the group to expand its toolset.</p> <p>What's the new discovery?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Errors in OpSec enabled <a href="#">researchers</a> to discover multiple new tools that were used by Charming Kitten in late 2021. One of these tools is used to grab data from targeted Telegram accounts.</li> <li>• Researchers also found that the threat actors had used tactics of a now-defunct cybercriminal group—Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)—to conduct a surveillance operation in 2021.</li> <li>• Besides these, the group has also been found using macro-enabled Word document template files to spread malware since March 2022, a new TTP not previously associated with Charming Kitten.</li> </ul> <p>About the Telegram grabber tool</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researchers claim that the capabilities of the new Telegram grabber tool overlap with those of PINEFLOWER, an Android malware used by Charming Kitten.</li> <li>• It has been used against some domestic targets in 2021 to obtain specific access to Telegram messages and contacts.</li> <li>• It is written in C++ and uses the open-source Telegram Database Library (TDLib). The tool has been designed to exfiltrate information such as messages, associated media, and contact data from victims' Telegram accounts.</li> <li>• The tool has options to view the password hint and send an access code via the victim's recovery email address. This enables the attackers to gain unauthorized access to a Telegram account and proceed further.</li> <li>• The exfiltrated data is stored within a SQLite database and in JSON format.</li> </ul> <p>Macro-enabled Word document templates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between January and March, the attackers were observed using macro-enabled Word document template files to drop malicious payloads.</li> <li>• This was the first time that the attackers were found using remote template injection as part of their attack sequence.</li> <li>• The document lures covered a variety of themes in nuclear energy and weapons related to Turkey, U.S. shipping ports, and Iran's relationship with the Taliban.</li> <li>• Many of these lures used material sourced from legitimate news and media sites.</li> <li>• Once these malicious macros are enabled, they caused the download of the PowerShell backdoor named CharmPower.</li> </ul>

	<p>Bottom line</p> <p>Charming Kitten continues to add new tools to its arsenal. With the discovery of new tactics, researchers highlight that the attackers have made efforts to stage various parts of the infection chain remotely.</p>
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## Terror Conditions

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HEADLINE	<b>08/03 Taliban leaders gather after US strike</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/tight-lipped-taliban-leaders-gather-after-us-says-zawahiri-killed-2022-08-03/">https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/tight-lipped-taliban-leaders-gather-after-us-says-zawahiri-killed-2022-08-03/</a>
GIST	<p>KABUL, Aug 3 (Reuters) - Top leaders of Afghanistan's Taliban were holding discussions on Wednesday about how to respond to a U.S. drone strike in Kabul that the United States said killed al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, three sources in the group said.</p> <p>The United States killed Zawahiri with a missile fired from a drone while he stood on a balcony at his Kabul hideout on Sunday, U.S. officials said, the biggest blow to the militants since Osama bin Laden was shot dead more than a decade ago.</p> <p>The Taliban have not confirmed Zawahiri's death.</p> <p>Officials of the Islamist group, long-time allies of al Qaeda, initially confirmed the Sunday drone strike but said the house that was hit was empty.</p> <p>"There are meetings at a very high level on whether they should react to the drone strike, and in case they decide to, then what is the proper way," a Taliban leader who holds an important position in Kabul told Reuters.</p> <p>The official, who said there had been lengthy leadership discussions for two days, declined to be identified. He did not confirm that Zawahiri was in the house that the missile struck.</p> <p>How the Taliban react could have significant repercussions as the group seeks international legitimacy, and access to billions of dollars in frozen funds, following their defeat of a U.S.-backed government a year ago.</p> <p>Zawahiri, an Egyptian doctor, was closely involved in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States and was one of the world's most wanted men.</p> <p>His death in Kabul raises questions about whether he received sanctuary from the Taliban, who had assured the United States as part of a 2020 agreement on the withdrawal of U.S.-led forces that they would not harbour other militant groups.</p> <p>U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the Taliban had "grossly violated" the agreement by hosting and sheltering Zawahiri.</p> <p>Outside a tight circle of top Taliban leaders, group members appeared in the dark about whether Zawahiri was actually in Kabul, let alone his fate.</p> <p>Another Taliban official confirmed the high-level meetings but said he did not know what was being discussed and he did not believe Zawahiri was in the house.</p> <p>Suhail Shaheen, the designated Taliban representative to the United Nations, who is based in Doha, told journalists he had received no word on the Taliban position.</p>

	"I am awaiting details and reaction from Kabul," he told reporters in a message.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Pakistan militants claim helicopter downing</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/pakistan-insurgents-claim-downing-army-helicopter-killing-six-2022-08-03/">https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/pakistan-insurgents-claim-downing-army-helicopter-killing-six-2022-08-03/</a>
GIST	<p>QUETTA, Pakistan, Aug 3 (Reuters) - Separatist insurgents in Pakistan's resource-rich Balochistan province said they shot down a military helicopter that went down during a flood relief operation on Monday, killing all six on board including a top army commander.</p> <p>A senior military official dismissed the insurgents' claim as propaganda and fake news. The military said the helicopter crashed during bad weather.</p> <p>The Baloch Raaji Aajoi Sangar (BRAS), an umbrella group of Baloch insurgent groups, said in a statement sent to Reuters late on Tuesday that its fighters shot down the "low flying helicopter" with an anti-aircraft weapon.</p> <p>The group provided no evidence and Reuters could not independently verify the claim.</p> <p>Ethnic Baloch militants have for decades waged an insurgency against the Pakistani government in the southwestern province, complaining that its rich gas and mineral resource are unfairly exploited to the benefit of other parts of the country.</p> <p>The province is also home to deep-water Gawadar port, which neighbouring China has been developing as part of a multi-billion dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor to link road and sea routes with Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative.</p> <p>The insurgents oppose those projects and try to attack them.</p> <p>The commander of the south Pakistan-based 12 Corps, Lieutenant General Sarfraz Ali, was among those killed on the helicopter.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 State Dept. issues terrorism threats alert</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.axios.com/2022/08/02/al-zawahiri-killing-terror-threats">https://www.axios.com/2022/08/02/al-zawahiri-killing-terror-threats</a>
GIST	<p>The State Department warned Tuesday that there is a "higher potential for anti-American violence" following the U.S. killing of al-Qaeda leader <a href="#">Ayman al-Zawahiri</a>.</p> <p><b>Why it matters:</b> The U.S. drone strike against al-Zawahiri in Kabul delivered the most significant blow to the terrorist group since the death of Osama bin Laden, but it has also triggered concern about renewed threats against U.S. citizens as al-Qaeda and its allies consider their next move.</p> <p><b>What they're saying:</b> "The Department of State remains concerned about the continued threat of terrorist attacks, demonstrations, and other violent actions against U.S. citizens and interests overseas," the agency said in its <a href="#">Worldwide Caution advisory</a> on Tuesday.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"The Department of State believes there is a higher potential for anti-American violence given the death of Ayman al-Zawahiri on July 31, 2022," the State Department continued.</li> <li>"Current information suggests that terrorist organizations continue to plan terrorist attacks against U.S. interests in multiple regions across the globe," the State Department noted. "These attacks may employ a wide variety of tactics including suicide operations, assassinations, kidnappings, hijackings, and bombings."</li> </ul> <p><b>The bottom line:</b> "As terrorist attacks, political violence (including demonstrations), criminal activities, and other security incidents often take place without any warning, U.S. citizens are strongly encouraged to</p>

	maintain a high level of vigilance and practice good situational awareness when traveling abroad," the State Department said.
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	Click on link to view State Dept. advisory: <a href="https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/worldwide-caution.html">https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/worldwide-caution.html</a>

<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/03 Burkina Faso army admits killing civilians</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://news.yahoo.com/burkina-faso-army-admits-killing-093213405.html">https://news.yahoo.com/burkina-faso-army-admits-killing-093213405.html</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>OUAGADOUGOU (Reuters) - Burkina Faso's army said on Wednesday that it accidentally killed civilians during a counter-terrorist operation in the country's southeast earlier this week.</p> <p>The West African country has been battling an insurgency by Islamist militant groups, some linked to al Qaeda and Islamic State, which control large swathes of territory and wage frequent attacks.</p> <p>"During operations which made it possible to neutralize several dozen terrorists, the strikes unfortunately caused collateral victims within the civilian population," the army said in a statement.</p> <p>It did not say how many civilians were killed. The victims were hit by projectiles in the zone between Kompienga and Pognoa, near the border with Togo, on Monday, it said.</p> <p>Togo, which has been contending with the spillover of militancy from Burkina Faso, accidentally killed seven civilians in an air strike last month near the same border.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/02 Former al-Shabab leader now govt. minister</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.irishexaminer.com/world/arid-40931816.html">https://www.irishexaminer.com/world/arid-40931816.html</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>A former deputy leader of the al-Shabab extremist group has been named a government minister by Somalia's new administration in a move some analysts claim is a chance to persuade fighters to denounce violence.</p> <p>Mukhtar Robow has been given the post of religious affairs minister in the government of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud.</p> <p>Not all Somalis supported his ministerial appointment, with some calling it disrespectful to those who lost loved ones in al-Shabab attacks.</p> <p>Mr Robow, who once had a five million dollar US bounty on his head, defected from the al Qaeda-linked al-Shabab in 2017 and at first was greeted with praise by Somalia's government.</p> <p>But when he tried to seek the leadership of the country's south-west region in 2018, he was detained.</p> <p>The reason behind Mr Robow's arrest has never been made clear, Somalia's current president on multiple occasions has said the detention had no legal grounds. Somalia's government did not comment on his appointment on Tuesday.</p> <p>Mr Robow, who is believed to be in his early fifties, studied Islamic law in Sudan and is believed to have participated in the anti-Soviet fighting in Afghanistan. He once praised Osama bin Laden and tried to impose an Islamic state in Somalia.</p> <p>In 2008, the US imposed sanctions on him and named him a "specially designated global terrorist".</p> <p>He left al-Shabab after a dispute with the group's hardliners. "I disagreed with their creed, which does not serve Islamic religion," he said at the time.</p>

	<p>His defection occurred shortly after the US removed the bounty from his head at the Somali government's request.</p> <p>Somalia has engaged in US-backed efforts encourage fighters to leave al-Shabab in the belief that each defection exposes weakness in the extremist group, which has thousands of fighters and still controls large parts of the rural south and central regions.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Tactical questions: threat from Afghanistan</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/drone-strike-that-killed-al-qaeda-leader-ayman-al-zawahiri-raises-tactical-questions-on-threat-from-afghanistan-11659480248?mod=hp_lead_pos11">https://www.wsj.com/articles/drone-strike-that-killed-al-qaeda-leader-ayman-al-zawahiri-raises-tactical-questions-on-threat-from-afghanistan-11659480248?mod=hp_lead_pos11</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON—The CIA drone strike that <a href="#">killed al Qaeda's leader</a> over the weekend demonstrates potent U.S. capabilities to target individual terror chieftains, but leaves unanswered the question of whether Washington can remotely thwart plots in Afghanistan before they become a threat.</p> <p>Senior U.S. officials said that <a href="#">Ayman al-Zawahiri, who was killed</a> in a strike in Kabul on Sunday morning by Hellfire missiles fired from a drone, wasn't involved in planning al Qaeda terror operations at the time of his death, but rather offered guidance to the group and its many affiliates.</p> <p>U.S. officials said the strike, almost a year after President Biden <a href="#">ordered the U.S. withdrawal</a>, proved that an American presence in Afghanistan isn't needed to hit global terror groups. But critics of the administration's Afghanistan policy say the operation, while a welcome development in the long-term campaign to eliminate leaders of the group responsible for the <a href="#">9/11 attacks</a>, didn't demonstrate that the U.S. had the ability to respond to new threats that could emanate from the Taliban-ruled country following the American exit.</p> <p>Last year's <a href="#">chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan</a> and the Taliban's rapid takeover was a foreign-policy low point for the Biden administration, drawing bipartisan criticism. The Biden administration argued that it could conduct counterterrorism strikes from abroad—using so-called over-the-horizon capabilities such as airborne surveillance aircraft and Hellfire-missile-armed drones—and didn't need a military footprint on the ground in Afghanistan.</p> <p>“The United States continues to demonstrate our resolve and our capacity to defend the American people against those who seek to do us harm,” Mr. Biden said in a White House address Monday evening. Former top U.S. officials and analysts said the strike, while a major tactical success, doesn't itself validate Mr. Biden's over-the-horizon strategy.</p> <p>“Let's remember, this is one strike in a year,” Gen. Frank McKenzie, who led Central Command when U.S. and coalition troops withdrew from Afghanistan in August 2021, said in an interview. “A case in which you do not have the opportunity to do extended observation, in which the target is mobile, has good operational security and is located in a rural area would make it more difficult to have this kind of success.”</p> <p>Critics have seized on the al Qaeda leader's <a href="#">presence in a tony Kabul neighborhood</a> as evidence that Afghanistan is again becoming a threat source.</p> <p>U.S. officials said the Taliban had violated a February 2020 agreement signed during the Trump administration that stipulated the group wouldn't allow Afghanistan to be used as a haven for al Qaeda or other groups to hatch attacks against the U.S. and its allies. It appears that while a Taliban faction known as the Haqqani network, which has close al Qaeda ties, knew of Zawahiri's presence in Kabul, other factions didn't.</p> <p>The Haqqani network is also highly placed in the current Afghan government; Sirajuddin Haqqani, who leads the group and is wanted by the FBI for questioning in connection with terrorist attacks, is the current</p>

interior minister of Afghanistan. The U.S. government is still offering a \$10 million reward for information leading to his arrest.

American officials said that Zawahiri's presence alone didn't mean al Qaeda was reconstituting its old network in Afghanistan. The officials say they are more worried about the group's affiliates in Africa and Yemen than the remnants of the Afghan-based group, decimated by two decades of U.S. counterterrorism operations.

Zawahiri's presence in a part of the city inhabited by diplomats and privileged foreigners demolishes claims of the Taliban that it had severed ties with al Qaeda, and will undermine Taliban efforts to unfreeze \$9 billion in assets that the U.S. is holding, said Bruce Hoffman, an expert on terror at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

"He was clearly a Taliban intimate and treated with great deference and respect," Mr. Hoffman said.

Some details of the final months of the nearly 21-year hunt for Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden's former deputy, remain unclear, making judgments about Mr. Biden's overall strategy difficult. The unknowns include from which country the drone that fired two missiles at him was launched, and how U.S. spy agencies first detected a human network that supported the al Qaeda emir, tracking his family to a safe house in the Afghan capital where he was found. U.S. officials declined to disclose those details of the operation.

It was at the safe house that U.S. intelligence agencies first observed the man they became increasingly confident was Zawahiri. As the U.S. watched the location, some mornings, just after daybreak, he would emerge onto a third-floor balcony, almost always alone, sometimes reading.

A senior U.S. official, briefing reporters on Monday, said there were no U.S. personnel on the ground during the drone strike. However, the CIA has made moves to recruit people in Afghanistan. A U.S. military veteran who works on efforts to protect former Afghan commandos and others at risk said the agency had approached the organization for possible collaboration.

Charles Lister, a senior fellow at the Middle East Institute think tank, said, tracking down one high-value target after 20 years "is a massive accomplishment. But it's totally different from detecting a plot, or multiple plots, or plotters."

One official familiar with the situation disputed that, saying that Zawahiri was a hard target, and that the grueling intelligence work and the precision strike that killed him are the same tools that would be used against other terrorists, even in Afghanistan's hinterlands.

U.N. specialists and private analysts say the more immediate terror threat from Afghanistan is likely to come from the local branch of Islamic State, known as ISIS-K, which is itself at war with Afghanistan's Taliban rulers.

A U.N. Security Council report released last month said that al Qaeda is unlikely to launch attacks outside of Afghanistan because of its capabilities, and restraint by the Taliban. While al Qaeda is a significant long-term threat, ISIS-K "poses the greater threat in the short and medium term," the report said.

Mr. Lister also said the al Qaeda leader didn't pose an immediate threat beyond Afghanistan's borders.

"Ayman al-Zawahiri was never going to be a critical plotter of terrorist attacks abroad," he said. "He's the overall grandfather figure."

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HEADLINE	08/02 Death puts focus back on AQ
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/02/us/politics/al-qaeda-terrorism-isis.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/02/us/politics/al-qaeda-terrorism-isis.html</a>



WASHINGTON — No terrorist group, not even the Islamic State, has had the notoriety and immediate name recognition of Al Qaeda.

But the killing of the group's leader, [Ayman al-Zawahri](#), in a C.I.A. drone strike early Sunday marks a pivotal inflection point for the global organization. Eight of its top leaders have been killed in the past three years, and it is unclear who will succeed al-Zawahri.

Yet Al Qaeda is in more countries and has more total fighters than it did on Sept. 11, 2001, when it attacked the United States. Some of its franchises that have sprung up since then, particularly in Somalia and the Sahel region of West Africa, are ascendant, seizing swaths of territory from weak governments and spending millions of dollars on new weapons, despite a decade's effort to weaken and contain them.

None of these affiliates pose the same kind of threat to the American homeland that Al Qaeda did on Sept. 11. But they are deadly and resilient. The Qaeda affiliate in East Africa killed three Americans at a U.S. base in Kenya in 2020. A Saudi officer training in Florida [killed three sailors and wounded eight other people](#) in 2019. The officer acted on his own but was in contact with the Qaeda branch in Yemen as he completed his attack plans.

And as al-Zawahri's presence in Kabul suggests, Al Qaeda and its leaders feel confident moving around Afghanistan, now that the [Taliban are back in control](#) of the country, counterterrorism officials said.

"The question isn't what this does to Al Qaeda, but what does this do to the witches' brew of terrorists in Afghanistan?" said Brian Katulis, the vice president for policy at the Middle East Institute.

Al Qaeda is not the only global terrorist network in transition. A risky predawn raid in northwest Syria in early February by U.S. Special Operations forces resulted in the death of the Islamic State's overall leader, [Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi](#). ISIS fighters have reverted to a guerrilla war since the last remnant of its caliphate, or religious state, in Syria was seized by U.S.-backed Syrian Kurds in 2019.

But al-Zawahri's death puts the focus back on Al Qaeda, which had largely been overshadowed by its upstart Islamic State rival, also known as ISIL, after Osama bin Laden's death in 2011. Many terrorism analysts said [Saif al-Adel](#), a senior Qaeda leader wanted by the F.B.I. in the bombings of two United States embassies in East Africa in 1998, was likely to succeed al-Zawahri. He is believed to be living in Iran.

"The international context is favorable to Al Qaeda, which intends to be recognized again as the leader of global jihad," [a U.N. report concluded in July](#). "Al Qaeda propaganda is now better developed to compete with ISIL as the key actor in inspiring the international threat environment, and it may ultimately become a greater source of directed threat."

### **Afghanistan**

No country is under greater U.S. scrutiny for a comeback by Al Qaeda than Afghanistan. In [announcing al-Zawahri's death](#) on Monday, President Biden said [the strike](#) would help ensure that Afghanistan could no longer "become a terrorist safe haven" or a "launching pad" for attacks against the United States.

But the withdrawal of U.S. forces from the country last August put pressure on the military and spy agencies to watch for a Qaeda resurgence with only limited informant networks on the ground and drones flying from the Persian Gulf on "over the horizon" surveillance missions.

This spring, [another U.N. report](#) cautioned that Al Qaeda had found "increased freedom of action" in Afghanistan since the Taliban seized power. The report noted that a number of Qaeda leaders were possibly living in Kabul and that an increase in public statements and videos by al-Zawahri suggested that he was able to lead more effectively and more openly after the Taliban took control.

But the intelligence shared by U.N. member nations in the July report indicated that Al Qaeda did not pose the same immediate threat as the Islamic State affiliate in Afghanistan.

“Al Qaeda is not viewed as posing an immediate international threat from its safe haven in Afghanistan because it lacks an external operational capability and does not currently wish to cause the Taliban international difficulty or embarrassment,” the U.N. report concluded.

Outside Afghanistan, Al Qaeda’s far-flung affiliates enjoyed local autonomy while adhering to al-Zawahri’s overall strategy. As a result, his death will most likely have little impact on the franchises’ day-to-day operations, counterterrorism specialists said.

“Today, Al Qaeda Central is largely a spiritual authority to guide — but not directly oversee,” said Rita Katz, the co-founder of SITE Intelligence Group, which tracks extremist groups online. “The global jihadi movement has proven resilient.”

### **Somalia**

The wealthiest and most lethal Qaeda affiliate today is Al Shabab, the franchise in Somalia and the rest of East Africa, military and counterterrorism officials said.

According to the most recent U.N. report, Al Shabab currently has 7,000 to 12,000 fighters and is spending approximately \$24 million a year — a quarter of its budget — on weapons and explosives, and increasingly on drones.

And the threat is getting worse. “It is my judgment that due to a lack of effective governance and counterterrorism pressure, Al Shabab has only grown stronger and bolder over the past year,” Gen. Stephen J. Townsend, the head of the Pentagon’s Africa Command, [told the Senate in March](#).

In the latest sign of trouble, almost 500 Shabab fighters crossed into eastern Ethiopia last month and clashed with Ethiopian forces along the border, General Townsend said.

In May, Mr. Biden [signed an order](#) authorizing the Pentagon to redeploy hundreds of Special Operations forces inside Somalia — largely reversing a decision by President Donald J. Trump to withdraw nearly all 700 ground troops who had been stationed there.

In addition, Mr. Biden approved a Pentagon request for standing authority to target about a dozen suspected leaders of Al Shabab. Since Mr. Biden took office, airstrikes in Somalia have largely been limited to those meant to defend partner forces facing an immediate threat.

Together, the decisions by Mr. Biden resurrected an open-ended American counterterrorism operation that amounted to a low-grade war through three administrations.

Military officials said the total number of U.S. troops having a “persistent presence” in Somalia would be capped at around 450. That will replace a system in which U.S. troops trained and advised Somali and African Union forces during short visits.

The Biden administration’s strategy in Somalia is to try to reduce the threat from Al Shabab by suppressing its ability to plot and carry out complicated operations, such as [the attack on a U.S. air base at Manda Bay, Kenya](#), in January 2020 that killed three Americans.

### **West Africa**

In the Sahel, the vast arid region south of the Sahara, militants from both Al Qaeda and the Islamic State have been fighting local governments in countries like Mali and Burkina Faso for years.

Despite the arrival of French troops and a U.N. peacekeeping force, militants spread across Mali and then to neighboring nations. In Burkina Faso, to the south, nearly two million people have been displaced by the conflict.

Countries on the Gulf of Guinea, like Benin and Ivory Coast, have also suffered sporadic attacks as the violence seeps south. The Qaeda affiliate, known as JNIM, trains recruits in Burkina Faso before redeploying them “to their countries of origin,” the July U.N. report said.

### **Syria**

The most serious terrorism concerns in Syria focus on the thousands of Islamic State fighters in the country’s northeast.

American counterterrorism officials have voiced alarm in recent years about a Qaeda affiliate in Syria, Hurras al-Din, that they say is plotting attacks against the West by exploiting the chaotic security situation in the country’s northwest and the protection inadvertently afforded by Russian air defenses shielding Syrian government forces.

But recent U.S. airstrikes, such as one in June in Idlib Province that the military said killed Abu Hamzah al Yemeni, one of the group’s senior leaders, have eased some of the worries.

### **Yemen**

For more than a decade, Al Qaeda’s affiliate in Yemen was one of the most dangerous terrorist organizations on the planet. The group spent years inventing explosives that were difficult to detect, including trying to disguise bombs in devices like cellphones. It has tried at least three times to blow up American airliners, without success.

But several of the group’s leaders have been killed in recent years, damaging its ability to orchestrate or carry out operations against the West, American and European counterterrorism specialists say.

Clashes with rival Islamic State and Houthi rebel fighters in Yemen have also weakened the group, whose full name is Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, or AQAP. Even though the group has been diminished, intelligence and counterterrorism officials warn that the organization remains dangerous.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Taliban govt. faces international isolation</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/02/world/asia/afghanistan-taliban.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/02/world/asia/afghanistan-taliban.html</a>
GIST	<p>Hours after an American drone strike killed the leader of Al Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahri, in downtown Kabul, Taliban security forces rushed to seal off the site. Green tarps were thrown over destroyed windows. Checkpoints were put up, and shops were closed.</p> <p>But there was no hiding the damage that had been done to the Taliban’s nascent government, which had tried to shelter the world’s most wanted terrorist from the eyes of the American government.</p> <p>The strike early Sunday morning — and the public revelation that the Taliban had sheltered a key plotter of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the heart of the Afghan capital — was a watershed moment for the group’s new government. And it underscored the reality of their rule: The Taliban have not fundamentally reformed from their first regime in the 1990s, when their hard-line policies and relationship with Al Qaeda turned the country into a pariah state.</p> <p>Retaliation against Al Qaeda and the Taliban allies who sheltered the terrorist group drove the United States to invade Afghanistan in 2001, beginning a two-decade-long war that ravaged the country. Now, the Taliban seem to be once more treading the same path, fueling criticism that their government should never be internationally recognized, and raising questions about whether a new era of U.S. strikes in Afghanistan has begun.</p> <p>A <a href="#">statement</a> from the Taliban condemned the American strike, without specifically mentioning al-Zawahri or Al Qaeda. “It is an act against the interests of Afghanistan and the region,” said Zabihullah Mujahid, a spokesman for the Taliban government. “Repeating such actions will damage the available opportunities.”</p>

The strike comes at an already tenuous moment for the Taliban. Since seizing power, the group [has promised to moderate](#) as it seeks international recognition and aid from Western diplomats abroad, even while staying true to its hard-line ideological beliefs at home.

In recent months, the government has enacted increasingly oppressive policies, including restricting women's rights to travel and work. And it has [reneged on an early promise](#) to allow girls to attend secondary school, a stark echo of its first rule.

Those measures have increasingly turned international attitudes against the government and have cost the country millions in foreign aid, [worsening its dire economic crisis](#). Now, the strike against Al Qaeda's leader in the heart of Kabul has opened a new chapter for the Taliban government, seemingly cementing its international isolation.

The strike highlights what many analysts and experts have warned for months: that the Taliban have allowed terrorist groups, including Al Qaeda and the Pakistani Taliban, to exist freely on Afghan soil since the takeover despite an agreement with the United States in which the group pledged to keep Afghan territory from becoming a haven for terrorist plotting.

"No one is terribly surprised that the Taliban is playing footsie with Al Qaeda, and no one is terribly surprised the U.S. hit him with a drone," said Graeme Smith, a senior consultant for the International Crisis Group who focuses on Afghanistan.

"The risk now is a slippery slope of 'over the horizon' strikes being a viable option dealing with very complicated threats that are coming from Afghanistan," he added. "There is a rich history of airstrikes not having their intended consequences in Afghanistan."

Sunday's strike signals the first use of the Pentagon's so-called "over the horizon" strategy in Afghanistan, in which the United States attacks targets with aircraft based outside the country.

Following the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan last year, American officials have moved to reposition American forces in neighboring countries where they can launch strikes like the one on al-Zawahri. This strategy is still in its infancy, and talks about positioning forces in places like Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Pakistan are still in their early stages.

It remains unclear whether the strike over the weekend will be the first of many, or a one-off.

"The strike doesn't necessarily tell us much about the over-the-horizon strategy because it was clear that al-Zawahri was a big enough fish to go after regardless of the general policy," Mr. Smith added.

For many Afghans in Kabul, news of the U.S. airstrike in the heart of the capital stirred deep-seated fears of a return to the era of American military intervention, after a relatively peaceful stretch over the past year since the U.S. troop withdrawal and end of the devastating two-decade war.

American officials insisted that no one other than al-Zawahri was killed or hurt in the strike over the weekend. But just a year ago, in the chaotic final days of its withdrawal in August 2021, the United States carried out a drone strike based on bad information that killed 10 civilians in Kabul — an error American officials acknowledged only after [reporting by The New York Times](#).

Shafiq, 25, said he was arranging fruit at his stand in the Wazir Akbar Khan neighborhood of Kabul when he heard a powerful explosion. For a moment he froze, he said, seized by the fear that once again hundreds of people had been killed in a deadly attack. In time, he came to fear that it could be the beginning of yet another bloody conflict.

"I am personally very worried about the future of our country," said Shafiq, whose full name is being withheld for security reasons. "We want peace and security in our country after this, and we do not want war to start in our country again."

The Taliban's history with Al Qaeda stretches back decades. Mullah Omar, the Taliban's first leader in the 1990s, was largely deferential to Al Qaeda's expanding existence in the country's east during those years. Some Taliban factions had a closer relationship with the terrorist organization than others — especially the Haqqani network, whose senior leadership fought alongside and aided Al Qaeda's founder, Osama bin Laden, during the Soviet-Afghan war.

As its terrorist camps spread, Bin Laden issued a “declaration of jihad” in summer 1996 that called for attacks on the United States. Omar was at times clearly frustrated with the negative international attention that began focusing on his government, but he still refused to eject Bin Laden, even after Al Qaeda's Sept. 11 attacks set the United States on the path to invasion.

Both Bin Laden and al-Zawahri pledged allegiance to the Taliban's leaders over the years, though al-Zawahri's most recent pledge — in 2016 after Haibatullah Akhundzada rose to become supreme leader of the Taliban — was never publicly accepted or rejected by the group.

Over the course of the U.S. war in Afghanistan, American forces periodically killed Qaeda leaders in Afghanistan, despite the group's having been mostly driven out of the country or into hiding in the mountainous border regions with Pakistan.

But a larger drift back into Afghanistan began in more recent years. In 2015, U.S. and Afghan commandos, backed by American air support, attacked an Al Qaeda training camp in the southern part of the country that military officials said was one of the largest ever discovered. One such camp sprawled over 30 square miles, and hundreds of Qaeda fighters were killed or injured in the battle, U.S. officials said at the time.

Less than a year before the United States left Afghanistan, and after U.S. and Taliban officials had signed the Doha agreement in 2020, Afghan government forces killed a senior Qaeda leader who was under the protection of the Taliban in southeastern Afghanistan. The raid was a clear indication that the Taliban had refused to sever ties with the terrorist group despite the commitments made in the Doha talks. Still, the American troop withdrawal continued.

Since the Taliban seized power, analysts and experts have warned that terrorist groups, including Al Qaeda and the Pakistani Taliban, have been able to operate more freely across Afghanistan.

Cross-border attacks launched by the Pakistani Taliban from Afghanistan more than doubled in the eight months after the Western-backed government collapsed, according to the Islamabad-based Pak Institute for Peace Studies. And this spring, [United Nations monitors](#) warned that the Taliban were providing “[operating space for about 20 terrorist groups](#) broadly aligned with Al-Qaida and Taliban objectives.”

The U.N. report added that Al Qaeda had found “increased freedom of action” in Afghanistan since the Taliban seized power and that al-Zawahri had been issuing regular video messages — a sign that he was feeling more comfortable since the Taliban's takeover and his move back to Afghanistan.

Now, following al-Zawahri's death at the hands of the United States, many are waiting to see how Al Qaeda and the Taliban will define their relationship.

“It's interesting what happens next,” said Ibraheem Bahiss, an analyst with Crisis Group's Asia Program. “If Al Qaeda chooses a leader that's present in Afghanistan, then it doesn't solve the Taliban's conundrum.”

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HEADLINE	08/02 Consequences for Taliban?
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/02/us/politics/al-zawahri-biden-afghanistan.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/02/us/politics/al-zawahri-biden-afghanistan.html</a>



WASHINGTON — The sunrise [missile strike](#) that shredded the leader of Al Qaeda on the balcony of a house in Kabul finally validated President Biden's decision to withdraw from Afghanistan. Or perhaps the strike discredited it. Or maybe some combination of both.

The coming anniversary of the [chaotic American withdrawal](#) from Afghanistan was already sure to instigate a round of arguments about its wisdom, but the killing of [Ayman al-Zawahri](#) by a C.I.A. drone hovering over the Afghan capital has crystallized the debate in a visceral way.

To Mr. Biden and his allies, the precision operation that took out one of the patrons of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks without civilian deaths demonstrated that war can be waged against terrorists without large deployments of American troops on the ground. To his critics, though, the stunning realization that al-Zawahri had returned to Kabul evidently under the protection of the Taliban made clear that Afghanistan has again become a haven for America's enemies.

"The successful U.S. strike vindicates those who've argued for an over-the-horizon counterterrorism strategy in Afghanistan," Kate Bateman, who helped write reports for the American government on corruption, drugs, gender inequality and other issues in Afghanistan, said in [a discussion hosted by the U.S. Institute of Peace](#). "But Zawahri finding harbor in Kabul may also point to a graver threat than was assumed."

The dual conclusions emerging from the strike complicated an otherwise heady moment for a president who just authorized the operation that took out one of the most wanted men in the world. Hunting down and killing al-Zawahri may not have resonated with the public in the same way [the raid that dispatched Osama bin Laden](#) did in 2011, but it was nonetheless seen across the board as a victory for the United States.

The implications of that victory, however, were still being sorted out the day after Mr. Biden's nighttime address to the nation announcing the drone strike from over the weekend. The president now confronts the question of what, if anything, he will do in response to the revelation that the Taliban were [once again sheltering the leader](#) of a group dedicated to killing Americans.

The peace agreement that led to last year's troop withdrawal, [negotiated by President Donald J. Trump](#) before he left office and then carried out by Mr. Biden, specified that the Taliban would not allow Afghanistan to become a launching pad for future Al Qaeda violence against the United States as it was before the Sept. 11 attacks.

While the Biden administration called al-Zawahri's presence a clear violation of that deal, known as the Doha Agreement for the capital of Qatar where it was sealed, some analysts said the Taliban could maintain that it was not out of compliance because sheltering the fugitive head of Al Qaeda was not the same as serving as a staging ground for new attacks.

The White House did not see it that way. "The Taliban have a choice," John F. Kirby, the strategic communications coordinator for the National Security Council, told reporters on Tuesday. "They can comply with their agreement" to bar terrorists from their territory "or they can choose to keep going down a different path. If they go down a different path, it's going to lead to consequences."

But neither Mr. Kirby nor other officials would specify what kind of consequences Mr. Biden had in mind. There is no appetite in the White House, or for that matter most of Washington, for a return of significant military force to Afghanistan. And the Taliban leadership that swept into power in the wake of last year's American withdrawal has successfully defied international pressure as it has reimposed a repressive regime, including a renewed crackdown on the rights of women and girls.

"We're back to where we were before 9/11, and unfortunately that means the Taliban and Al Qaeda are back together," said Bruce Riedel of the Brookings Institution, an adviser to multiple presidents on the Middle East and South Asia who conducted a review of Afghanistan policy for President Barack Obama when he came into office. "Twenty years of effort were wasted."



Al-Zawahri returned to Afghanistan earlier this year, according to American intelligence reports, moving with his family into a house in one of the most exclusive enclaves of Kabul, where American and other foreign diplomats lived not too long ago only to surrender the neighborhood to Taliban figures. “He must have felt very safe, 100 percent confident that nothing could harm him,” Mr. Riedel said.

Indeed, the Taliban clearly knew al-Zawahri was there and safeguarded him. He was living in a house owned by a top aide to [Sirajuddin Haqqani](#), the Taliban interior minister and part of the Haqqani terrorist network with close ties to Al Qaeda, according to two people with knowledge about the residence. After the strike, members of the Haqqani network tried to conceal that al-Zawahri had been at the house and restrict access to the site, senior American officials said.

Mr. Biden justified his [decision to pull out last year](#) on the grounds that Al Qaeda was no longer there. “What interest do we have in Afghanistan at this point, with Al Qaeda gone?” [he said at the time](#). “We went to Afghanistan for the express purpose of getting rid of Al Qaeda in Afghanistan as well as getting Osama bin Laden. And we did.”

Mr. Kirby argued on Tuesday that the president meant that Al Qaeda was no longer a significant force in Afghanistan by that point, noting that government assessments at the time concluded the group’s presence was “small and not incredibly powerful.” Mr. Kirby added, “We would still assess that to be the case.”

As a result, he and other officials said, the strike on al-Zawahri showed that even without the Taliban living up to its commitments, the United States retained the ability to take out threats in Afghanistan by employing military forces based elsewhere in the region, or over the horizon, as the strategy is called.

“It has proven the president right when he said one year ago that we did not need to keep thousands of American troops in Afghanistan fighting and dying in a 20-year war, to be able to hold terrorists at risk and to defeat threats to the United States,” Jake Sullivan, Mr. Biden’s national security adviser, [said on ABC’s “Good Morning America.”](#)

Still, some counterterrorism experts expressed caution. “The strike proves that over-the-horizon” counterterrorism strategy “can work — emphasis on ‘can’ — but not that it will generally,” said Laurel Miller, a former acting special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan under Mr. Obama.

“Zawahri was a special case, for which all the stops would be pulled out in terms of resources and level of effort,” added Ms. Miller, who is now at the International Crisis Group. “This operation does not automatically erase the assessment that” operating from outside the country “has significant limitations.”

Daniel Byman, a terrorism expert at Georgetown University who served on the staff of the bipartisan commission that investigated the Sept. 11 attacks, said the al-Zawahri strike proved that the United States could still wage war without troops on the ground and that without troops on the ground Afghanistan would become a sanctuary again for Al Qaeda.

“They’re both right,” he said of allies and critics of the president.

But what might be more concerning, he added, was that the flashy success of knocking off a marquee figure like al-Zawahri only goes so far in dismantling terror networks.

“From what has been reported, it does show impressive operational capacity,” he said. “However, much of the U.S. success against Al Qaeda and ISIS came from grinding decapitation campaigns that went after trainers, recruiters, planners and other lieutenants. Doing such a sustained campaign in Afghanistan seems quite difficult.”

At the same time, Mr. Byman said, whoever succeeds al-Zawahri will presumably be more cautious, limiting communications and meetings, making it harder to actually lead a global organization. “So even being able to threaten the very top,” he said, “does have some value.”

HEADLINE	<b>08/02 CIA tracked leader of Al Qaeda</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/02/us/politics/cia-qaeda-al-zawahri.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/02/us/politics/cia-qaeda-al-zawahri.html</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — Intelligence officers made a crucial discovery this spring after tracking Ayman al-Zawahri, the leader of Al Qaeda, to Kabul, Afghanistan: He liked to read alone on the balcony of his safe house early in the morning.</p> <p>Analysts search for that kind of pattern-of-life intelligence, any habit the C.I.A. can exploit. In al-Zawahri's case, his long balcony visits gave the agency an opportunity for a clear missile shot that could avoid collateral damage.</p> <p>The hunt for al-Zawahri, one of the world's most wanted terrorists, stretches back to before the Sept. 11 attacks. The C.I.A. continued to search for him as he rose to the top of Al Qaeda after the death of Osama bin Laden and after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan last year. And a misstep during the chase, the recruitment of a double agent, led to one of the bloodiest days in the agency's history.</p> <p>Soon after the United States left Kabul, the C.I.A. sharpened its efforts to find al-Zawahri, convinced he would try to return to Afghanistan. Senior officials had told the White House they would be able to maintain and build informant networks inside the country from afar, and that the United States would not be blind to terrorism threats there. For the agency, finding al-Zawahri would be a key test of that assertion.</p> <p>This article is based on interviews with current and former American and other officials, independent analysts who have studied the decades-long hunt and others briefed on the events leading up to the weekend strike. Most spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitive intelligence used to find al-Zawahri.</p> <p>For years al-Zawahri was thought to be hiding in the border area of Pakistan, where many Qaeda and Taliban leaders took refuge after the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001. He was wanted in connection with the 1998 embassy bombings in Tanzania and Kenya, and the C.I.A. had tracked a network of people who intelligence officials thought supported him.</p> <p>The examination of that network intensified with the <a href="#">U.S. exit from Afghanistan</a> last year and a belief among some intelligence officials that senior leaders of Al Qaeda would be tempted to return.</p> <p>The hunch proved right. The agency found out that al-Zawahri's family had returned to a safe house in Kabul. Though the family tried to ensure they were not being watched and to keep al-Zawahri's location secret, intelligence agencies soon learned he too had returned to Afghanistan.</p> <p>"There was a renewed effort to figure out where he was," said Mick Mulroy, a former C.I.A. officer. "The one good thing that might have come out of withdrawing from Afghanistan is that certain high-level terrorist figures would then think it is safe for them to be there."</p> <p>The safe house was owned by an aide to senior officials in the Haqqani network, a battle-hardened and violent wing of the Taliban government, and it was in an area controlled by the group. Senior Taliban leaders occasionally met at the house, but American officials do not know how many knew that the Haqqanis were hiding al-Zawahri.</p> <p>If some senior Taliban officials did not know that the Haqqanis had allowed al-Zawahri to return, his killing could drive a wedge between the groups, independent analysts and others briefed on the events said.</p> <p>It is not clear why Al-Zawahri moved back to Afghanistan. He had long made recruiting and promotional videos, and it may have been easier to produce them in Kabul. He also may have had better access to medical treatment.</p>

No matter what the reason, his ties to leaders of the Haqqani network led U.S. intelligence officials to the safe house.

“The Haqqanis have a very long relationship with Al Qaeda going back to the mujahedeen days,” said Dan Hoffman, a former C.I.A. officer. “They provide Al Qaeda with a lot of tactical support that they need.”

Once the safe house was located, the C.I.A. followed the playbook it wrote during the hunt for Bin Laden. The agency built a model of the site and sought to learn everything about it.

Analysts eventually identified a figure who lingered on the balcony reading, but never left the house, as al-Zawahri.

U.S. officials quickly decided to target him, but the location of the house posed problems. It was in the Sherpur neighborhood of Kabul, an urban area of closely spaced houses. A missile armed with a large explosive could damage nearby homes. And any sort of incursion by Special Operations forces would be prohibitively dangerous, limiting the options for the U.S. government to conduct a strike.

The search for al-Zawahri carried huge importance for the agency. After the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, the C.I.A. base in Khost Province became home to a targeting group dedicated to tracking both Bin Laden and al-Zawahri. It was one of the leads developed by the C.I.A. to track al-Zawahri that proved disastrous for the agency’s officers at that base, Camp Chapman.

C.I.A. officers hoped [Humam Khalil Abu Mulal al-Balawi](#), a Jordanian doctor and propagandist for Al Qaeda, would lead them to al-Zawahri. He provided American officials with information about al-Zawahri’s health, convincing them his intelligence was real. But he was in fact a double agent, and on [Dec. 30, 2009](#), he showed up at Camp Chapman with a suicide vest. When it exploded, seven C.I.A. officers were killed.

For many, the Khost attack intensified efforts to find al-Zawahri. “To honor their legacy, you carry on with the mission,” Mr. Hoffman said.

In 2012 and 2013, the C.I.A. focused the hunt on Pakistan’s North Waziristan region. C.I.A. analysts were confident they had found the small village where al-Zawahri was hiding. But intelligence agencies could not find his house in the town of about a dozen compounds, making a raid or drone strike impossible.

Still, the U.S. hunt forced al-Zawahri to remain in the tribal areas of Pakistan, possibly limiting the effectiveness of his leadership within Al Qaeda.

“Anytime anything related to Bin Laden or Zawahri hit the intel channels, everyone stopped to pitch in and help,” said Lisa Maddox, a former C.I.A. analyst. “It was the C.I.A.’s promise to the public: to bring them to justice.”

On April 1, top intelligence officials briefed national security officials at the White House about the safe house and how they had tracked al-Zawahri. After the meeting, the C.I.A. and other intelligence agencies worked to learn more about what they called al-Zawahri’s pattern of life.

One key insight was that he was never seen leaving the house and only seemed to get fresh air by standing on a balcony on an upper floor. He remained on the balcony for extended periods, which gave the C.I.A. a good chance to target him.

Al-Zawahri continued to work at the safe house, producing videos to be distributed to the Qaeda network.

A senior administration official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive decisions leading to the strike, said the intelligence presented to the White House had been repeatedly vetted, including by a team of independent analysts tasked with identifying everyone who was staying at the safe house.

As options for a strike were developed, intelligence officials examined what kind of missile could be fired at al-Zawahri without causing major damage to the safe house or the neighborhood around it. They ultimately decided on a form of Hellfire missile designed to kill a single person.

William J. Burns, the C.I.A. director, and other intelligence officials briefed President Biden on July 1, this time with the model of the safe house, the senior official said.

At that meeting, Mr. Biden asked about the possibility of collateral damage, prodding Mr. Burns to take him through the steps of how officers had found al-Zawahri and confirmed his information, and their plans to kill him.

Mr. Biden ordered a series of analyses. The White House asked the National Counterterrorism Center to provide an independent assessment on the impact of al-Zawahri's removal, both in Afghanistan and to the network worldwide, said a senior intelligence official. The president also asked about the possible risks to Mark R. Frerichs, an American hostage held by the Haqqanis.

In June and July, officials met several times in the Situation Room to discuss the intelligence and examine the potential ramifications.

The C.I.A. plans called for it to use its own drones. Because it was using its own assets, few Pentagon officials were brought into the planning for the strike, and many senior military officials learned about it only shortly before the White House announcement, an official said.

On July 25, Mr. Biden, satisfied with the plan, authorized the C.I.A. to conduct the airstrike when the opportunity presented itself. Sunday morning in Kabul, it did. A drone flown by the C.I.A. found al-Zawahri on his balcony. The agency operatives fired two missiles, ending a more than two-decade-long hunt.

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HEADLINE	08/02 Decades-long hunt to kill al-Zawahiri
SOURCE	<a href="https://nypost.com/2022/08/02/inside-the-decades-long-hunt-for-ayman-al-zawahri/">https://nypost.com/2022/08/02/inside-the-decades-long-hunt-for-ayman-al-zawahri/</a>
GIST	<p>US intelligence had hunted al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri for decades — then spent several months <a href="#">meticulously planning his death</a> once he was traced to Afghanistan, where he was put up as a guest of the ruling Taliban following the <a href="#">disastrous US withdrawal</a> last year.</p> <p>The coward who co-planned the Sept. 11 attacks had become the world's most wanted terrorist soon after his cohort, Osama bin Laden, was killed in a <a href="#">daring US raid in May 2011</a> — with a <a href="#">\$25 million bounty</a> on his head.</p> <p>Under four presidents, US intelligence operatives hunted al-Zawahiri, who was rumored variously to be in Pakistan's tribal area or inside Afghanistan.</p> <p>The CIA came tantalizingly close to possibly capturing al-Zawahiri in 2003, and then killing him in 2004. The agency thought it finally had him in its sights in 2009, only to be tricked by a double agent who blew himself up, killing seven agency employees and wounding six more in Khost, Afghanistan.</p> <p>He was finally pinpointed earlier this year in Afghanistan's capital, Kabul, staying with his wife, his daughter and her children in a safe house supported by the Haqqani Taliban network, officials said.</p> <p>“We were able to build a pattern of life through multiple independent sources of information to inform the operation,” a senior administration official told reporters Monday.</p> <p>Throughout that time, the terrorist appeared to never leave the safe house — but was spotted on “multiple occasions, for sustained periods of time” on the balcony where he was ultimately pulverized Sunday.</p>

“Bin Laden always looked up to” Ayman al-Zawahiri, because he was “a jihadi from the time he was a teenager,” terrorism expert Bruce Hoffman said.

Two senior national security officials were first briefed on the intelligence in early April, with the president being briefed by national security adviser Jake Sullivan shortly thereafter.

Through May and June, a small circle of officials across the government worked to vet the intelligence and devise options for Biden, the officials said.

Biden was then briefed on the proposed strike by his national security aides on July 1, after returning from a five-day trip to Europe.

Officials had painstakingly constructed “a pattern of life” to pin down al-Zawahiri’s movements, even building a scale model of the safe house that was shown to Biden in the White House Situation Room.

Ayman al-Zawahiri was on US list of most wanted terrorists, with a \$25 million reward noted in the poster, which was updated to list him as “deceased.”

The president received a final briefing on July 25, as he remained isolated in the White House residence with COVID-19, the insiders said.

Biden — who had tried to halt then-President Barack Obama’s deadly strike on bin Laden — this time gave the sign-off for “a precise tailored airstrike” as soon as the opportunity arose, officials said.

That opportunity came early Sunday — late Saturday in Washington — after what Biden described as “clear and convincing” signs that they could kill him in a way to “minimize the risk of harm to other civilians.”

A further 36 hours of intelligence analysis would follow before US officials began sharing that al-Zawahiri was dead.

The Haqqani Taliban network was seen restricting access to the safe house and relocating the dead al Qaeda leader’s family — which officials interpreted as the country’s rulers trying to conceal the fact that they had harbored the world’s most wanted terrorist.

“Justice has been delivered and this terrorist leader is no more,” Biden finally told the nation Monday. al-Zawahiri was finally pinpointed earlier this year in Kabul, staying with his wife, his daughter and her children in a safe house supported by the Taliban.

“Now we make it clear again tonight, that no matter how long it takes, no matter where you hide: If you are a threat to our people, the United States will find you and take you out,” he said.

Ayman al-Zawahiri was just 15 when he was known to have sought to overthrow Egypt’s “infidel” regime, ultimately serving three years in prison in connection to the 1981 assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat.

It was after his release in 1984 that he first courted bin Laden — who was wowed by his soon-to-be right-hand man’s lifelong devotion to jihad.

“Bin Laden always looked up to him,” said terrorism expert Bruce Hoffman of Georgetown University. He was impressed that al-Zawahiri “spent time in an Egyptian prison, he was tortured. He was a jihadi from the time he was a teenager.”

The pair were high on the intelligence radar for decades before Sept. 11, with al-Zawahiri assumed to lead al Qaeda’s tactics and organizational skills while his supposed leader supplied charisma and cash.

“For decades, he was the mastermind behind the attacks against Americans,” Biden said Monday as he declared that “justice has been delivered” with al-Zawahiri’s death.

As the commander-in-chief noted, the terrorist “played a key role, a key role in the bombing of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing 224 and wounding over 4,500 others” in 1998.

He was behind “the USS Cole [bombing] in 2000, which killed 17 American sailors and wounded dozens more,” Biden stressed.

“He carved a trail of murder and violence against American citizens, American service members, American diplomats and American interests,” he said.

When the US invaded Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks in 2001, al-Zawahiri and bin Laden fled to Pakistan — as a US airstrike killed al-Zawahiri’s wife and at least two of their six children.

He was named al Qaeda’s leader less than two months after bin Laden was killed in a US raid on his compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, leading the global network from isolation.

By the time al-Zawahiri was finally pulverized by two US Hellfire missiles Sunday, he had devoted nearly all of his 71 years to terrorism.

White House national security spokesman John Kirby said Tuesday the US had no DNA confirmation of his death, but had verified his identity through other sources.

“We do not have DNA confirmation. We’re not going to get that confirmation. Quite frankly, based on multiple sources and methods that we’ve gathered information from, we don’t need it,” Kirby told CNN.

“We have visual confirmation, but we also have confirmation through other sources.”

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HEADLINE	08/02 Heir apparent to AQ leadership role?
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11070971/Is-Al-Qaedas-chief-Heir-apparent-oversaw-Black-Hawk-helped-carry-9-11.html">https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11070971/Is-Al-Qaedas-chief-Heir-apparent-oversaw-Black-Hawk-helped-carry-9-11.html</a>
GIST	<p>The heir apparent to the al-Qaeda throne after tonight's confirmed <a href="#">death of Ayman al-Zawahiri</a> is a canny, military-trained operative with experience killing British and American soldiers.</p> <p>Egyptian ex-army officer Saif al-Adel was a founding member of al-Qaeda, having joined pre-cursor terrorist group Maktab al-Khidamat in the late-1980s.</p> <p>There he met future allies Osama bin Laden and al-Zawahiri, whose separate group Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) he would soon join.</p> <p>Little else is known about Saif al-Adel, who at around 60 years of age is one of the younger al-Qaeda bosses.</p> <p>Al-Adel was around 30 when he oversaw the infamous 'Black Hawk Down' operation in Mogadishu, Somalia, in which 19 American soldiers were killed and had their bodies dragged through the streets.</p> <p>Seven more were slain when two helicopters were shot down in the east Africa ambush, including two British soldiers, three Turks and a Frenchman.</p> <p>And since the assassination of Osama bin Laden in 2011, al-Adel has become an increasingly important strategist within the depleting terror cell.</p>



The only thing standing in his way to become the next al-Qaeda leader is that he is likely stuck in Iran - and may well have been for the past 19 years.

In 2003, Iranian Ambassador to the UN Javad Zarif refused to confirm nor deny whether al-Adel was being held in the country.

He told ABC News that terrorists tend to have multiple passports, with the Iranian government unable to confirm their identities.

With what's left of al-Qaeda now based in Afghanistan - and in coexistence with the Taliban - al-Adel's geographic isolation could stop him taking the helm, foreign policy analyst [Charles Lister](#) suggested tonight.

Yet Foundation for the Defense of Democracies senior fellow Bill Roggio remained bullish about al-Adel's chances of succeeding the role, telling [Task and Purpose](#) he remains the 'likely' candidate.

With his real name thought to be Mohammed Salah al-Din Zaidan, al-Adel's made-up moniker translates to 'Sword of Justice'.

Thought not as brainwashed by Islamist ideology as his al-Qaeda colleagues, al-Adel used his military training to rise to the top of the shadowy organisation in the wake of the September 11 attacks, in which senior operatives killed themselves.

Al-Adel was in fact against the so-called 'Planes Operation', as it was known by members of the terror cell. But he helped organise the single most deadly terrorist attack in history after bin Laden became committed to the idea.

According to ex-FBI agent and counter-terrorism expert Ali Soufan, who suggested al-Adel would be '[al-Qaeda's next leader](#)' last year, Saif possesses a 'poker face' and a 'caustic tongue'.

When training young soldiers, he was known to kidnap them in the middle of the night and conduct savage beatings in order to harden the troops.

Al-Adel has risen to the top of al-Qaeda as much because of his own talents as by the United States' ruthlessness in killing his superiors.

Osama's assumed successor son Hamza was killed in 2019 and fellow senior strategist Abu Muhammad al-Masri was assassinated in 2020.

US intelligence states: 'Al-Adel is wanted in connection with the August 7, 1998, bombings of the United States Embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya.'

Two hundred and twenty-four people died in the three East Africa blasts, including 12 Americans, with more than 4,500 people wounded.

A \$10million reward for information has been placed on al-Adel's head.

And with ex-leader al-Zawahiri now slain, the attention of America's terrorist hunters will likely go onto Saif al-Adel.

Al-Zawahiri, who took over Al-Qaeda after Bin Laden's death in 2011, was killed in Kabul, Afghanistan following a US airstrike this evening.

The terrorist leader is said to have guided Al-Qaeda to become one of the biggest radical movements, having been identified as a mastermind of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States that killed nearly 3,000 people.

At 15, the Egyptian spearheaded his own militant group, Jamaat al-Jihad, that championed large-scale attacks and the murder of civilians.

As it grew, he later merged it with Al-Qaeda in the 1990s, bringing this focus on indiscriminate killing to the terrorist group.

The 71-year-old was on the FBI's most-wanted terrorist list, having declared the US 'the far enemy', with a \$25 million reward for information leading directly to him.

The surgeon led a terrorist lab developing biological weapons and was the force behind Al-Qaeda's ambition to gain nuclear weapons.

'To kill Americans and their allies — civilian and military — is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in every country in which it is possible to do it, Al-Zawahiri wrote in a 1998 manifesto.

Three years later, he helped plan the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Al-Zawahiri was planned follow-on attacks across the US, and started a biological weapons program in Afghanistan. He sent group disciples out to find lethal strains of anthrax and scientists that would engage with his plans.

However, the Egyptian abandoned the biological weapons laboratory after a US-backed military effort forced Taliban allies of Al-Qaeda out of power in Afghanistan.

It comes after a top ISIS official was assassinated by the United States early in July when he and his deputy were hit by an American drone strike in northwest Syria.

The strike killed senior ISIS leader Maher al-Agal, US officials said, taking credit for the daytime attack in the northern village of Khaltan in the Syrian countryside.

Al-Agal - one of the top five leaders in the terrorist group - was riding a motorbike in the village when he was targeted by the American missile, which killed him instantly.

Another senior ISIS official was also hit by the attack, officials said, but survived. The official, who was not named, was reportedly wounded.

Al-Agal's body, which was badly burned and mutilated in the attack, was transported to an Idlib hospital.

The attack took place in the Jenderies district in Afrin - an area northwest of Aleppo, near the country's shared border with Turkey.

The war-torn region has been under occupation by the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA) since March 2018.

In January 2020, the United States carried out an airstrike that killed a leader of Al Qaeda's affiliate in Yemen after months of tracking him.

Qassim al-Rimi, 41, was killed in the January strike but officials had been waiting to confirm the information before making public statement.

In November, CIA personnel learned of al-Rimi's location from an informant. The government then started using surveillance drones to track him, according to an U.S. official who was briefed on the strike.

Local news in Yemen reports that the strike killed two militant suspects in the area of Wadi Abedah in central Yemen, but did not identify who those people were.

Al-Rimi is a veteran of the Queda training camps in Afghanistan and whose 'terrorist pedigree traces to the era before the September 11 attacks,' NYT reports.

He then returned to Yemen and was sentenced to five years in prison there for plotting to kill the American ambassador there.

Al-Rimi broke out of jail after only a year and quickly rose in the ranks of the Qaeda affiliate.

A \$5million reward for any information leading to his capture was offered by the State Department. It was late doubled to \$10million as al-Rimi was linked to numerous plots against the U.S.

In 2017, al-Rimi notably sent President Donald Trump an audio message taunting him for a Special Operations Forces raid on an al Qaeda compound in Yemen that led to the first military combat death under the Trump administration, CNN reports.

President Joe Biden confirmed the leader of ISIS was dead in February in what he described as a cowardly move to blow up himself and his family instead of facing justice for his terrorists acts.

Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi set off a bomb that killed himself as well as his wife and two children during a raid by U.S. commandos on a house in northwest Syria.

'United States military forces successfully removed a major terrorist threat to the world,' Biden said in remarks at the White House.

Thirteen were reported killed, including six children and four women during the mission, which involved 24 Special Operations commandos backed by attack jets, Reaper drones and helicopter gunships.

'As a final act of desperate cowardness, [al-Qurayshi] with no regard to the lives of his own family or others in the building, he chose to blow himself up,' Biden said, adding the ISIS leader blew up 'that third floor rather than face justice for the crimes he has committed, taking several members of his family with him.'

'This horrible terrorist leader is no more,' he added.

After al-Qurayshi was named the head of ISIS in 2019, the United States put a bounty of up to \$10 million on his head.

Biden, along with Vice President Kamala Harris and national security aides monitored a live-feed of the operation from the White House Situation Room, according to a photo released by the administration.

'This operation is testament to America's reach and capability to take out terrorist threats, no matter where they try to hide anywhere in the world. I'm determined to protect the American people from terrorist threats, and I'll take decisive action to protect this country,' Biden said in his short remarks where he took no questions.

'We remain vigilant. We remain prepared. Last night's operation took a major terrorist leader off the battlefield and sent a strong message to terrorists around the world: We will come after you and find you,' the president added.

In the raid, U.S. special forces landed in helicopters and assaulted the house in a rebel-held corner of Syria, near the border with Turkey, clashing for two hours with gunmen, witnesses said in local reports.

	<p>The raid targeted a large house in Atmeh in the Idlib region of Syria where the ISIS leader was hiding. The three-story house was left with its top floor shattered in the wake of al-Qurayshi's suicide bomb.</p> <p>It was a gruesome scene, according to local reports, with blood splattered on the white bricks that constructed the home and body parts scattered around the area.</p> <p>Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, also known as Abdullah Qardash or Hajji Abdullah, became the leader of the ISIS terrorist organization after former leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi also blew himself up in a similar raid by U.S. forces in 2019 in the nearby town of Barisha.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Al-Zawahiri death unlikely to weaken AQ</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/02/ayman-al-zawahiri-killing-unlikely-to-significantly-weaken-al-qaida">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/02/ayman-al-zawahiri-killing-unlikely-to-significantly-weaken-al-qaida</a>
GIST	<p>Ayman al-Zawahiri was a low-key but effective leader of al-Qaida <a href="#">whose death</a> will cause the terrorist organisation some short-term turbulence but is unlikely to cause any major long-term problems.</p> <p>A decade ago, killing Zawahiri would have made a major difference. Now, though the nature of his death demonstrates the US's continuing ability to strike individual enemies even in hostile environments and raises questions about the Taliban's relationship with extremist groups, it is unlikely to weaken al-Qaida significantly.</p> <p>Zawahiri, 71, was seriously ill and many key tasks are likely to have been handled by others for several years. One of these younger men will now take on the leadership role. Despite significant attrition in recent years of potential successors, there are several capable candidates.</p> <p>The favourite to take over is Mohammed Salah al-Din Zaidan, <a href="#">better known as Saif al Adel</a>, a 60-year-old Egyptian-born veteran of Islamic extremism who has long been considered a capable organiser by western security services. He is in Iran, however, with <a href="#">no ability to travel and his communications monitored</a>.</p> <p>Others touted as possible successors include Abd al-Rahman al-Maghrebi, the director of al-Qaida's media campaigns, Abu al-Walid al-Falastini, a senior Syria-based ideologue, and several leaders of local affiliated organisations, such as Yazid Mebrak of <a href="#">Al-Qaida</a> in the Islamic Maghreb and Ahmed Diriye of Al-Qaida in East Africa.</p> <p>Whoever takes over, his strategic decisions will be important. Though al-Qaida was known for its innovative empowerment of local cells, the man at the top of the hierarchy has real authority. An oath of loyalty is sworn not to the group, but to the individual.</p> <p>This is one reason Osama bin Laden, al-Qaida's founder and leader, was able to overrule senior aides who objected to his chosen strategy of striking the "Far Enemy", the west. If he had not, the 9/11 attacks of September 2001 in which nearly 3,000 people died could not have taken place.</p> <p>When Zawahiri became leader after <a href="#">Bin Laden's death in a US special forces raid in Pakistan in 2011</a>, he turned al-Qaida away from spectacular long -range attacks, believing they were counter-productive. In his last days, Bin Laden had directed meticulously planned <a href="#">ambitious strikes against oil tankers</a>, believing these would cripple the US economy. Zawahiri cancelled the plot. Instead, links with groups around the world were reinforced and efforts made to expand through gradually winning support from communities on the ground.</p> <p>This did not always bring success, and al-Qaida suffered significant setbacks in Iraq and Syria during the 11 years Zawahiri was in charge. The rise of a rival in Islamic State, which swept through these two countries and set up a new "caliphate", led to a loss of profile and influence in a key region as well as competition elsewhere. The limited achievements of its affiliate in Yemen, once seen as a major potential threat to the region and the west, must have been a disappointment.</p>

But in the long run, Zawahiri's tortoise looks set to beat the IS hare, and al-Qaida has managed to maintain or increase its presence through sub-Saharan Africa, in parts of south Asia and in other parts of the Middle East. Zawahiri's personal decision to strengthen ties with al-Shabaab, the extremist movement in Somalia, has paid dividends with the group so secure that it now contributes millions of dollars to al-Qaida's central treasury, according to recent intelligence reports. Zawahiri also appears to have managed relations with the various factions of the Taliban well. He died standing on the balcony of a house in the Afghan capital belonging to an aide of a hardline Taliban leader.

But what will be the strategy of the new leader? Whoever takes over has multiple options – but no easy ones. He has to stay alive, communicate despite considerable logistic challenges, deal with regimes like the Taliban and formulate a clear idea of what his subordinates should be doing.

Attempts to launch long-range attacks on the west should be practically possible, even if they might be thwarted by much improved defences. Al-Qaida may not have mounted a significant strike on such a target for a decade but analysts believe that the organisation could build the networks and skills necessary to mount such an operation without great difficulty.

A [United Nations report](#), based on intelligence from member states, pointed out last that al-Qaida thrives because of instability and violence in the sort of places that appear remote from London, Paris or Washington. Unless such conflicts are brought to a successful resolution, “one or more” such places “will incubate an external operational capability for IS, al-Qaida or a related terrorist group”, it warned.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Drone strike Kabul little deniability Taliban</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/02/ayman-al-zawahiri-kabul-neighbourhood-al-qaida-leader-dead-sherpur">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/02/ayman-al-zawahiri-kabul-neighbourhood-al-qaida-leader-dead-sherpur</a>
GIST	<p>The leader of al-Qaida spent the last weeks of his life less than 500 metres from the swimming pool and bar where British diplomats relaxed during their Kabul tours.</p> <p>The gaudy house where <a href="#">Ayman al-Zawahiri was reportedly killed by a drone strike</a> while out on his balcony is nestled at the very heart of the Afghan capital.</p> <p>By Tuesday morning, sheets of dark green plastic covered shattered windows that were shown in photos shared earlier on social media. But Afghanistan's new rulers were aggressive about keeping journalists and curious bystanders from taking a closer look at the damaged house.</p> <p>“It is our own pain, let us deal with it,” one belligerent <a href="#">Taliban</a> guard told Guardian reporters, after blocking entry to the street where Zawahiri had lived, following them as they left the site and demanding access to their phones.</p> <p>Other journalists were harassed and had guns pointed at them. Neighbours said the Taliban had visited overnight and ordered them not to let anyone on to rooftops that might give a clear view of the four-storey home.</p> <p>Local residents in the capital's Sherpur neighbourhood said they had no idea they were sleeping next door to a man with a \$25m (£20.5m) bounty on his head, but said they were used to living in a dangerous area.</p> <p>Its wealthy, high-profile residents and a cluster of nearby embassies have made it a magnet for major attacks for years.</p> <p>In 2014, an assault on a popular Lebanese restaurant <a href="#">killed more than 20 people</a>, a truck bomb in 2017 outside the nearby German embassy killed over 150 in 2017, and a blast almost exactly a year ago <a href="#">destroyed the house</a> of then defence minister, Bismillah Khan.</p>

“We are familiar with these things,” said Saeed, who runs a travel agency just a couple of blocks from the site of the drone strike, which startled the office cleaner early on Sunday morning. “If there is someone [important] here, there is nothing we can do about it.”

He was relieved there was no damage from the strike, which the US claimed was so closely targeted it only killed one person, because the whole office had to be rebuilt after the German embassy blast five years ago.

But while previous killings in Sherpur were the work of Taliban suicide squads targeting Americans and their Afghan allies, this time the roles of hunter and hunted were reversed. It was a Taliban guest – or perhaps prisoner – who was in Washington’s sights.

“Given his location in a very busy (and formerly expat-heavy) area of Kabul, there is little deniability for the Taliban,” said Ashley Jackson, co-director of the Centre on Armed Groups and an expert on militant groups in Afghanistan.

“One theory is that the Taliban had him under some sort of house arrest, which would allow them to keep him under close watch and explain why he was in the heart of the capital.”

A year ago the al-Qaida leader’s neighbours in Sherpur would have included warlords and corrupt technocrats, whose vast mansions were [often built on stolen land](#). The area’s excesses became emblematic of the corruption and abuses of the Afghan republic.

At a now-shuttered supermarket at the end of the road, wealthy locals and foreigners could buy imported luxuries from frozen lobster to Dorset Cereals muesli and Ritter Sport chocolates.

A decade earlier many of Sherpur’s vast and often garish “poppy palaces” – named for the opium money sloshing into the capital – were also rented out at inflated prices to American contractors getting rich from the war.

By the time the al-Qaida leader reportedly moved in, earlier this year, Taliban ministers and commanders had replaced the elite of the Afghan republic and its allies. They took over some of the city’s prime real estate when they seized the levers of power, as their predecessors had done two decades earlier.

The view from the top of Zawahiri’s Kabul home would have included the vast old trees of the heavily fortified green zone, where diplomats and Nato generals hunkered down as they slowly lost the war.

Now it is the centre of the Taliban’s heavily sanctioned pariah regime, protected by extensive intelligence and security networks. In this militant bubble, Zawahiri apparently felt relaxed enough to be living with his family and spend time outside on the balcony, as US drones circled overhead, tracking the city’s residents.

Under the Doha deal Donald Trump’s administration negotiated with the Taliban that paved the way for America to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan, the militants promised to sever ties with al-Qaida.

They also pledged not to let Afghan territory be used for planning international terror attacks. Yet less than a year after the final US forces flew out of the city’s airport, Zawahiri was leading a global jihadi organisation from Kabul.

Joe Biden claimed the strike as a counter-terror victory, finally taking out one of the architects of the 9/11 attacks on America.

Yet many in Afghanistan fear more violence could yet follow. One local resident heard the drone hit. He said the area was soon flooded with troops from the Taliban’s elite Badri unit, who shut all the side roads to the house and one lane of the main road running outside.



	“I didn’t go close to the site, as they may arrest you and ask what you are doing,” he said, but added that he was disturbed by news of who had been hit. “Now I wonder if I should move away.”
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Dutch mom sentenced 3yrs; terror support</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/africa-netherlands-somalia-al-shabab-28726c5a5a84f93ac9482f8f5c34e300?utm_source=iterable&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=4787537">https://apnews.com/article/africa-netherlands-somalia-al-shabab-28726c5a5a84f93ac9482f8f5c34e300?utm_source=iterable&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=4787537</a>
GIST	<p>ALEXANDRIA, Va. (AP) — A Dutch woman was sentenced to three years in prison Monday for donating several hundred dollars to a group that supported the militant group al-Shabab in Somalia.</p> <p>The sentenced imposed on Farhia Hassan, 38, was far less than the 8-year sentence sought by prosecutors.</p> <p>She was convicted earlier this year by a jury at U.S. District Court in Alexandria of conspiring to provide material support to terrorists.</p> <p>Prosecutors said she was one of about 15 women who gathered in an online chatroom and regularly committed small amounts of money to support al-Shabab militants in Somalia and Kenya. In all, prosecutors say she donated about \$300 over a three-year period, though they admitted difficulty tracking payments.</p> <p>Hassan, a Somali native and mother of six, was granted asylum in the Netherlands as a teenager and settled in the city of Terneuzen. She was initially charged in 2014, but fought extradition for seven years before she was brought to the U.S. to face trial.</p> <p>Two leaders of the group have already been convicted and sentenced to terms of 12 and 11 years, respectively.</p> <p>Hassan’s lawyers argued she never should have been charged in the first place. They said it was overreach for the U.S. to charge a Dutch woman for supporting Somali militants when she had no connection whatsoever to the U.S.</p> <p>While al-Shabab has been designated a terrorist organization by the U.S., it carried no such designation in the Netherlands or the European Union at the time the group was active, from 2011 to 2014.</p> <p>The defense lawyers, Jessica Carmichael and Yancey Ellis, also said the minimal contributions attributed to their client warranted only a minimal sentence. They argued for a sentence of time served, about nine months.</p> <p>“Ms. Hassan has been punished enough,” they wrote in sentencing papers.</p> <p>Prosecutors, though, said \$300 can go a long way. In court papers, they said the money could be used in Somalia to pay an al-Shabab fighter’s monthly wages or buy an AK-47 military rifle or a camel.</p> <p>At Monday’s hearing, Hassan said through a Somali interpreter that she is not an al-Shabab supporter but was donating money to help the Somali people.</p> <p>Prosecutors, though, said there is no evidence Hassan has truly deradicalized, and said those who participated in the online chats regularly heard lectures supporting suicide attacks and assassination of clerics, among other violent acts.</p> <p>“Every indication before the Court is that she believes just as firmly in al-Shabab’s mission as she did in 2011 when the conspiracy began,” prosecutor Danya Atiyeh wrote.</p>

	Judge Anthony Trenga, who imposed the sentence, said he largely agreed about Hassan's radicalization. But he said Hassan's actions did not merit imposition of a so-called "terrorism enhancement" that usually results in extreme increases to the recommended term under federal sentencing guidelines.
	Hassan has the ability to appeal her conviction and sentence.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Israel arrests senior West Bank militant</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-troops-kill-palestinian-west-bank-flashpoint-jenin-2022-08-01/">https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-troops-kill-palestinian-west-bank-flashpoint-jenin-2022-08-01/</a>
GIST	<p>JERUSALEM, Aug 1 (Reuters) - Israeli troops killed a Palestinian during a raid on a flashpoint West Bank town in which they arrested a local leader of the Islamic Jihad militant group, the health ministry and residents said.</p> <p>There were no immediate details on the identity of the man slain in Jenin, which has seen regular raids by Israel since several local men carried out a spree of deadly street attacks in its cities earlier this year.</p> <p>An Israeli police spokesperson said commandos disguised as Palestinians entered Jenin to make two arrests and came under fire. They shot back, hitting several gunmen, and left without suffering casualties, the spokesperson added.</p> <p>The West Bank, among areas where Palestinians seek statehood, has experienced simmering violence since U.S.-sponsored peace talks with Israel broke down in 2014. Islamic Jihad rejects co-existence with Israel.</p>
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## Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 WSP: 80+ HOV lane violations in under 3hrs</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/wsp-more-than-80-people-stopped-for-hov-lane-violations-in-under-3-hours">https://www.q13fox.com/news/wsp-more-than-80-people-stopped-for-hov-lane-violations-in-under-3-hours</a>
GIST	<p><b>SNOHOMISH COUNTY, Wash.</b> - More than 80 people were pulled over in under a three-hour timespan for illegally driving in HOV lanes in <a href="#">Snohomish County</a>, authorities say.</p> <p>According to the Washington State Patrol, six motorcycle troopers patrolled I-5 in Snohomish County. In just a 2.5-hour span, they pulled over 82 HOV violators.</p> <p>HOV lanes are restricted to cars with two or more passengers, public transportation, high-capacity charter vehicles and emergency vehicles. During peak hours, HOV toll lanes may require three or more passengers in a car.</p> <p>Some drivers use the HOV lanes to get around I-5's notorious traffic slowdowns—but this is illegal if they are the only one in the car.</p> <p>According to WSP, someone's first HOV offense is a \$189 fine, and a second offense is a \$339 fine.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Chances of climate catastrophe ignored</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/science/chances-of-climate-catastrophe-are-ignored-scientists-say/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/science/chances-of-climate-catastrophe-are-ignored-scientists-say/</a>
GIST	Experts are ignoring the worst possible climate change catastrophic scenarios, including collapse of society or the potential extinction of humans, however unlikely, a group of top scientists claim.

Eleven scientists from around the world are calling on the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the world's authoritative climate science organization, to do a special science report on "catastrophic climate change" to "bring into focus how much is at stake in a worst-case scenario." In their perspective piece in Monday's Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences they raise the idea of human extinction and worldwide societal collapse in the third sentence, calling it "a dangerously underexplored topic."

The scientists said they aren't saying that worst is going to happen. They say the trouble is no one knows how likely or unlikely a "climate endgame" is and the world needs those calculations to battle global warming.

"I think it's highly unlikely you are going to see anything close to even extinction over the next century simply because humans are incredibly resilient," said study lead author Luke Kemp at the Center for the Study of Existential Risk at the University of Cambridge in England. "Even if we have a 1% chance of having a global catastrophe, going extinct over the coming century, that 1%, that is way too high."

Catastrophic climate scenarios "appear likely enough to warrant attention" and can lead to prevention and warning systems, Kemp said.

Good risk analyses consider both what's most likely and what's the worst that could happen, study authors said. But because of push back from non-scientists who reject climate change, mainstream climate science has concentrated on looking at what's most likely and also disproportionately on low-temperature warming scenarios that come close to international goals, said co-author Tim Lenton, director of the Global Systems Institute at the University of Exeter in England.

There is, Lenton said, "not enough emphasis on how things, the risks, the big risks, could go plausibly badly wrong."

It's like an airplane, Lenton said. It's overwhelmingly likely that it will land safely, but it's only because so much attention was made to calculate the worst case scenario and then figure out how to avoid a crash. It only works if you research what could go badly wrong and that isn't being done enough with climate change, he said.

"The stakes may be higher than we thought," said University of Michigan environment dean Jonathan Overpeck, who wasn't part of the study. He worries that the world "may stumble" upon climate risks it doesn't know about.

When global science organizations look at climate change they tend to just look at what happens in the world: extreme weather, higher temperatures, melting ice sheets, rising seas and plant and animal extinctions. But they aren't factoring enough how these reverberate in human societies and interact with existing problems — like war, hunger and disease — study authors said.

"If we don't look at the intersecting risks, we'll be painfully surprised," said University of Washington public health and climate professor Kristie Ebi, a co-author who like Lenton has been part of United Nations global climate assessments.

It was a mistake health professionals made before COVID-19 when assessing possible pandemics, Ebi said. They talked about disease spread, but not lockdowns, supply chain problems and spiraling economies.

Study authors said they worry about societal collapse — war, famine, economic crises — linked to climate change more than the physical changes to Earth itself.

Outside climate scientists and risk experts were both welcoming and wary of focusing on the worst of the worst, even as many reject climate doom talk.

	<p>“I do not believe civilization as we know it will make it out of this century,” University of Victoria climate scientist Andrew Weaver, a former British Columbia legislator for the Green Party, said in an email. “Resilient humans will survive, but our societies that have urbanized and are supported by rural agriculture will not.”</p> <p>Climate scientist Zeke Hausfather of the tech company Stripe and Berkeley Earth has criticized climate scientists in the past for using future scenarios of greatly increasing carbon pollution when the world is no longer on those paths to more rapid warming. Yet, he said it does make sense to look at catastrophic scenarios “as long as we are careful not to conflate the worst case with the most likely outcome.”</p> <p>Talking about extinction of humans is not “a very effective communications device,” said Brown University climate scientist Kim Cobb. “People tend to immediately say, well, that’s just, you know, arm waving or doomsday mongering.”</p> <p>What’s happening short of extinction is bad enough, she said.</p> <p>Co-author Tim Lenton said researching worst case scenarios could find nothing to worry about: “Maybe it’s that you can thoroughly rule out a number of these bad scenarios. Well, that’s actually really well worth spending your time doing that. Then we should all cheer up a bit.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/03 New details human remains Lake Mead</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/03/us/lake-mead-remains-homicide-investigation-autopsies/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/03/us/lake-mead-remains-homicide-investigation-autopsies/index.html</a>
GIST	<p>(CNN)For investigators working on the cases of people <a href="#">whose remains were found</a> on the shore of Lake Mead, time is the enemy.</p> <p>The bodies -- one of which was found in a corroding barrel with a gunshot wound -- could have been submerged in the lake's depths decades ago, leaving the three sets of remains in advanced stages of decomposition and making it increasingly difficult to extract DNA. But officials have already discovered key details, which they revealed to CNN, including confirmation that the gunshot victim's death was a homicide.</p> <p>When police arrived at the lake's Hemenway Harbor on May 1 to investigate the discovery of a set of remains in a barrel, investigators immediately treated it as a homicide investigation, not waiting to get a confirmation from the coroner, Lt. Jason Johansson of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police homicide unit told CNN. The gunshot wound was obvious, he said, and the circumstances clearly suspicious.</p> <p>Clark County Coroner Melanie Rouse has since preliminarily ruled the cause and manner of death was homicide by gunshot and also said her office is submitting specimens from the remains to try to extract DNA. If DNA is found, it will also be sent to the FBI, which is assisting in the case, she said.</p> <p>The remains, dubbed Hemenway Harbor Doe by the coroner's office, are one of <a href="#">at least three sets</a> uncovered due to the dramatically receding water levels at Lake Mead, which has <a href="#">plunged to unprecedented lows</a> amid a critical water crisis in the West.</p> <p>Police previously announced they placed the Hemenway Harbor Doe's approximate time of death as sometime in the mid-'70s to early '80s, based on the victim's clothes and shoes. Johansson told CNN that the clothing was so well preserved in the freshwater environment that investigators were still able to read the clothing labels.</p> <p>But without an ID, investigators are extremely limited. And the more time passes, the harder it will be to identify aging witnesses and potential suspects.</p>

"If you think about what the age of who your witnesses or anybody related to this case would be, many of them are getting older every day. And they're at an age where you have to worry, are they even alive? And so I would say that's probably our biggest concern right now," Johansson said.

Rouse has preliminarily determined that the age of the person in the second set of remains -- found on May 7 at Calville Bay -- is approximately between 23 and 37 years old. While she couldn't confidently determine how the person died -- meaning the preliminary cause of death is undetermined -- the coroner's office is sending specimens to be examined for any potential DNA.

The Calville Bay remains are more skeletal than the other two sets, Rouse said, which both still have organ tissue available for examination, despite being immersed in the lake. The cooler underwater temperatures would cause a body to decompose more slowly than if it were baking under the desert sun, she explained.

The final remains were found at the lake's Swim Beach on July 25 and the examination is still at an early stage, Rouse said. Unlike the other two, these are only partial remains and Rouse is still processing them to determine what can even be examined based on their condition, she said.

The remains are undergoing toxicology and other testing before a cause and manner of death can be determined, the coroner said.

Police are not investigating the other two sets of remains because there is so far no sign of foul play or suspicious circumstances in the deaths, Johansson said, but he has no doubt the circumstances of the Hemenway Harbor Doe's death are nefarious.

"Anytime you have a body in a barrel, clearly there was somebody else involved," he said.

#### **No strong connection to organized crime yet, police say**

Theories of mob involvement in the Hemenway Harbor Doe's death began to swirl as soon as details emerged that the remains were found inside a barrel. Those ideas were fueled even more when police announced the victim was likely killed at a time when organized crime had a strong grasp on Las Vegas.

But those ideas are "mere speculation" at this point in the investigation, Johansson said, denying that there is any solid evidence to support mob theories.

"Yes, Vegas does have a history in the past where we had a connection to violent crime, to organized crime back in the '60s, the '70s," he said. "However, right now, there's nothing in this investigation that is directly tying it organized crime."

At its height in 1983, Lake Mead was 1,225 feet above sea level. But as the climate crisis fuels a prolonged mega-drought in the West, the lake, which serves as the nation's largest reservoir, has plummeted to sobering levels. [This year it hit its lowest level](#) since it was filled in the 1930s.

One possible scenario for the second two remains is that they belong to people who previously drowned at the lake when water levels were high, a National Parks Service spokesperson told CNN. Recovery divers are limited on how deep they can go, so some drowning victims' remains do not get recovered, they said.

"The lake has drained dramatically over the last 15 years," Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Homicide Lt. Ray Spencer said in May. "It's likely that we will find additional bodies that have been dumped in Lake Mead" as the water level drops further.

The dropping water level has exposed [a WW II-era landing craft](#), [wrecked boats](#) and the lake's original 1971 [water intake valve](#), and officials expect more surprises may be in store.

#### **How the coroner's office conducts examinations**

In addition to traditional autopsies, examiners at the Clark County coroner's office have a number of techniques they can use to uncover details about a body, including X-rays, fingerprinting, forensic dentistry and analysis by forensic anthropologists, Rouse said.

"In cases where we are limited [on identification methods], we would also conduct DNA analysis," she said, noting that method may not be ideal for some extremely decomposed remains.

For the two sets of Lake Mead remains from which the office is trying to extract DNA, those specimens would have to be sent to a lab, she said.

The condition of the body is essential in the examination process, she said, because more degraded remains may not be able to be fingerprinted or provide dental information. The coroner's office was able to perform forensic dentistry on the first two sets of Lake Mead remains, she said.

Examiners then compare the dental information to a dental records database, she said, so it's especially important to investigators that a person's dental records were submitted to the database. Otherwise, there will be no match.

The coroner's office is sharing its findings with law enforcement, she said, including the FBI in the case of the homicide victim.

The FBI reached out to Las Vegas police to offer help in the investigation because the body was found on National Park Service land, Johansson said. The agency, which had [a lively presence](#) in the area during the mob's heyday, also offered the assistance of its Organized Crime Task Force if local police need it, he said.

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## Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	08/03 Hate crime arrests rare on London transport
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.vice.com/en/article/5d33wn/hate-crime-figures-london-underground">https://www.vice.com/en/article/5d33wn/hate-crime-figures-london-underground</a>
GIST	<p>People who carry out hate crimes on the London Underground rarely end up being charged or arrested, leaving thousands of victims without justice, VICE World News can reveal.</p> <p>On average, only 10 percent of hate crimes reported to the British Transport Police (BTP) – the policing body that covers London’s large network of trains, tubes and trams – resulted in a charge or summons, new data shows.</p> <p>While BTP says this figure is only slightly lower than the national average, campaigners fear a lack of prioritisation is leaving the public unprotected despite extensive CCTV networks.</p> <p>A Freedom of Information (FOI) request submitted by VICE World News found that over the last four years, 4,795 hate crimes on the tube and overground network in London were reported to BTP. Between 2018 and 2021, on average only 10 percent of those incidents resulted in a charge or summons relating to the hate crime. In 2021, it was as low as 7 percent.</p> <p><a href="#">Home Office data</a> for the 12 months ending March 2021 shows an average of 11.6 percent of hate crimes in Britain resulted in charges or give a court summons, well above the 7 percent on London tube and trains in 2021.</p> <p>The numbers are surprisingly low given the thousands of cameras that survey London’s transport network.</p> <p>Hate crimes are classified as any crime where the victim has been targeted because of their race, sexuality, religion, disability or trans identity.</p>



Thousands of victims subject to racially aggravated attacks, robberies and harassment will never find justice, this data shows. Even if crimes eventually result in charges, this does not guarantee they will result in convictions.

Victims of these incidents say not enough is being done to investigate the crimes, with poor CCTV networks impacting the success of investigations.

In 2021, only 7 percent of incidents resulted in charges or summons – of 1,027 hate crimes that were reported, only 69 so far have resulted in charges or summons.

2019 had the second lowest percentage of incidents where victims saw their perpetrator charged. Of the 1,433 hate crimes reported in 2019, only 120 resulted in charges or a summons.

The most charges were issued in 2018, with 165 handed out across London's transport network, equivalent to 11 percent of all reported crimes

Arrest figures were also low. In 2018, 13 percent of hate crimes on London tubes and overground trains resulted in arrests. In 2019, 2020 and 2021, only 10 percent resulted in arrests.

The London Underground alone has over 90,000 cameras, making it one of the most highly surveilled areas in the city. Despite this, VICE World News has spoken to victims of hate crimes who have said CCTV footage has been lost or faulty, and hindered their ability to take their perpetrators to court – which may contribute to low charge and arrest figures.

While security experts say CCTV can be a useful tool in investigating cases of crime, tubes and stations in London don't always use the same technology, meaning they can be out-of-date and faulty, resulting in thousands of lost files and videos. Police are not responsible for the maintenance of CCTV networks, instead this is left to the train operating companies who own the stations and trains.

Bertie Darrell, 28, a playwright living in London, was the victim of a homophobic attack on a London Overground train in September 2020. He was harassed, repeatedly called a "f\*\*\*\*\* f\*\*\*\*\*" and kicked in the face. A failure to secure usable CCTV footage by BTP meant the perpetrator was never found.

"I felt really shaken up directly afterwards and I felt very anxious," Darrell told VICE World News. "It reminds you in such a forceful and violent way that you are vulnerable because of something so simple as your sexuality or your queer identity."

Darrell reported the incident immediately, and says he was told by British Transport Police that the investigation could commence once the CCTV footage from the train in south east London was received, which could take three weeks. Four weeks later, after Darrell followed up, he was informed they had collected the CCTV footage but that it was faulty and that faulty footage was normal. He enquired about a backup, but he was informed by British Transport Police that backups are deleted after seven days. Darrell also requested platform footage, which he was told expires after 28 days.

Eventually, police searched footage from outside of the station, but as the perpetrator was wearing a mask, they said that it could not be used. Despite following up with police several times – including asking them to do a social media call out where they used incorrect information – the investigation was dropped due to insufficient evidence and the attacker has never been charged.

Darrell said his experience illustrated why many hate crimes against LGBTQ people often do not get reported. "Given the kind of reluctance from the police to actually press these matters further, it doesn't exactly instil you with confidence," he said. "Why would you want to report it? If this is basically how you're treated?"

Darrell says the attack has changed him. “It does separate you from your previous self in some way,” he said. “Before the incident happened. I definitely felt a lot more carefree, really fearless. And then it just makes you more fearful.”

Other victims of hate crimes have told VICE World News they have had similar experiences.

Haya M Turkey, 30, a producer living in London was harassed and attacked on a London underground Tube in December 2021. Turkey had come to the UK as an asylum seeker and was returning from work in north London when the incident took place.

“[The woman] hit me and started saying, ‘Go back to your country, why did you come here?’” Turkey told VICE World News.

After the assault, Turkey got off the Tube at Charing Cross station in central London and said she asked staff to speak to the police, but was told that there were none on duty because it was a bank holiday.

She eventually was able to report the incident to British Transport Police, including details about the bag the woman was carrying. She was told they would check the CCTV for the station and was later told that the CCTV was not available after 14 days. Turkey says she had been emailing the police before then but only got a reply on the 15th day.

For a month after the incident, Turkey was too scared to take public transport to work, and took expensive taxis instead.

“After the incident, I wasn't able to use the train,” said Turkey. “It gave me a lot of flashbacks.”

Turkey’s incident took place on the Bakerloo line, which is only one of two Tube lines in London without CCTV cameras on the carriages.

Dr Matt Ashby, a lecturer in Crime Science at UCL Department of Security and Crime Science told VICE World News that CCTV failures, while rare, can still result in thousands of victims losing essential footage.

“CCTV not being helpful to an investigation because the system has failed doesn't happen very often,” said Ashby. “Over the five years that I looked at the data, it was about 6000 crimes of every type. But that is still 6000 victims whose cases haven't been able to be solved because CCTV was faulty.”

Various reasons may impact why these crimes never end up going to court, says Ashby.

“It's possible that [BTP] are really doing the best job they can do,” he said. “But it's also possible that those cases are being closed because they're not the resources to investigate them, or there are not resources to investigate them as fully as they could be. It's possible that might be due to a [national shortage of detectives](#).”

Responding to VICE World News’ data, Ashby said: “If I were [British Transport Police]. I would look at that number and try to try to dig into why it's not higher.”

A BTP spokesperson told VICE World News: “Preventing and tackling hate crime is a BTP priority – no one should be subjected to violence or harassment because of who they are.”

“We conduct highly visible patrols and dedicated operations across the railway to ensure the safety and security of passengers and staff. Our officers are ready to respond to incidents of hate crime immediately, and with access to more than 150,000 CCTV cameras across the rail network they can quickly identify offenders and make arrests.”

The spokesperson added: “It is important to contextualise that we are unique in policing a national and transient population, meaning that in many cases the offender and victim are not known to one another. We therefore encourage victims of, or witnesses to, hate crime to report incidents to us promptly so our detectives can secure CCTV footage and vital evidence to present cases to the Crown Prosecution Service for a charging decision.”

Sasha Misra, associate director of communications and campaigns at LGBTQ rights organisation Stonewall said: “These worrying figures show that the hate that LGBTQ+ people face while going about their daily lives is still not taken seriously. London's transport system should have adequate systems to record vital evidence of hate crimes taking place, and it is vital that victims and survivors are not let down by the justice system.

“We already know that [four in five \(81 per cent\) of LGBTQ+ people already do not report hate incidents to the police](#) and these statistics demonstrate why so many LGBTQ+ people feel disempowered to seek help. It's vital that real reforms are now made to ensure that LGBTQ+ people are safe and free to live their lives as themselves.”

Kevin Blowe from police monitoring website Netpol told VICE World News these numbers show the police are failing to protect the public.

“The staggeringly low rate of charging for hate crimes cannot simply derive from the lack of evidence or resources, it's about priorities,” he said.

“Hate crime across society has been [growing every year](#) for the last decade. BTP has clearly decided not to prioritise it,” said Blowe. “The public has a right to travel without facing hatred. It would appear from these statistics, however, that the police cannot protect us.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Report: violence up, officers down</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://seattlemedium.com/report-violence-up-officers-down/">https://seattlemedium.com/report-violence-up-officers-down/</a>
GIST	<p>According to a state crime report released by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC), there were 325 murders in 2021, an increase of 5.9% over 2020, following a 47% increase the year before. The association stated that this is the highest number of murders recorded since WASPC began collecting this data in 1980.</p> <p>The same report states that Washington state lost nearly 500 police officers statewide in 2021 as the state's population grew more than the population. The theme that was pushed by the law enforcement association is “violent crime up as Washington state sees decrease in police officers.”</p> <p>COVID has created some remarkable changes to the numbers. The report shows violent crime, including murder and assault, increased by more than 12% in 2021 while the number of police officers decreased 4.4%. WASPC tracks crime and arrest data from law enforcement agencies throughout the state. The association says the report is designed to give residents, elected officials, and law enforcement data-driven information about crime in their communities.</p> <p>Some more interesting information to see in the report includes hate crimes. According to the report, hate crimes in the state increased by 26.5% in 2021 with the most frequent offenses being intimidation and destruction of property.</p> <p>Interestingly enough, violent crime overall, which includes murder, aggravated assault, robbery and rape, increased by 12.3% in 2021. The kicker is the report states that total crime overall is statistically down slightly, including a 78.8% decrease in identity theft and fraud from 2020. This, the report states, is largely due to the huge spike in unemployment fraud during the pandemic.</p> <p>Other factors contributing to the statistical downward trend include a 60.9% decrease in drug offenses and a 73.6% decrease in drug arrests, due to a change in state laws. The Blake decision in 2021 is credited with</p>

	<p>much of the data as well. Blake completely changed the ability to charge a criminal offense for personal possession.</p> <p>The state's population gained 116,440 residents from 2020 to 7,772,505, according to the Washington State Office of Financial Management. The number of commissioned law enforcement officers decreased 4.4%. The per capita rate of law enforcement officers fell to 1.38 per 1,000 statewide.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 FBI major handwriting analysis study</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/law-enforcement-and-public-safety/fbi-laboratory-publishes-major-handwriting-analysis-study/">https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/law-enforcement-and-public-safety/fbi-laboratory-publishes-major-handwriting-analysis-study/</a>
GIST	<p>The FBI's Laboratory Division, in conjunction with Noblis, Inc., has published a major scientific research paper in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences about the accuracy and reliability of forensic handwriting comparison.</p> <p>The paper, "<a href="#">Accuracy and Reliability of Forensic Handwriting Comparisons</a>," summarizes the results of a five-year project to examine how often forensic handwriting examiners reach correct conclusions when determining whether a document was written by a specific individual by comparing it to samples of known handwriting from that person. The FBI Laboratory undertook this research to provide estimates of error rates—how often document examiners make correct writership decisions—as well as how often an examiner reaches the same conclusion when seeing the same documents again, and how often other examiners reach the same conclusions.</p> <p>This study is the largest of its kind, involving more than 80 document examiners from U.S. and international crime laboratories and private practice. Collectively, these examiners made more than 7,000 document comparisons and provided information with which to correlate results to levels of education and experience, along with other metadata.</p> <p>"This large-scale study demonstrates the commitment of the FBI and our partners to critically evaluate forensic examinations widely used throughout the criminal justice system," said FBI Director Christopher Wray. "Using scientific rigor to affirm the accuracy and reliability of forensic techniques helps protect the integrity of our judicial process and ensure that everyone is treated fairly under the law."</p> <p>The study is part of a portfolio of research projects conducted by the FBI Laboratory to evaluate the accuracy, repeatability, and reproducibility of pattern evidence examiner decisions. It was modeled after a highly acclaimed <a href="#">2011 FBI Laboratory</a> study about the accuracy and reliability of fingerprint examiner decisions, which is widely regarded within the forensic community as a gold standard in pattern evidence study design. That research project formed the basic design for this study and resulted in more than 15 scientific publications to date.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	<a href="#">Read the paper at the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences</a>

HEADLINE	<b>08/02 DC police: over 3 dozen shot in 6 days</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2022/08/02/mass-shooting-dc-azeeze-bates/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2022/08/02/mass-shooting-dc-azeeze-bates/</a>
GIST	<p>The <a href="#">mass shooting</a> that killed one man and wounded five others outside an apartment complex in Northeast Washington on Monday capped an especially violent six-day period in D.C., raising fears among some residents and sparking renewed calls from city leaders for action.</p> <p>In all, at least three dozen people have been struck by gunfire since July 27, and six have been killed, according to police. Twice in Southeast Washington last week, police said assailants armed with assault-style rifles <a href="#">sprayed more than 90 bullets</a> into parking lots, in one instance killing two men. Over the weekend, a <a href="#">police officer fatally shot</a> a man — after a shooting moments earlier injured two people in Northwest Washington.</p>

In the mass shooting, police said someone opened fire into a large crowd gathered outside the Azeze Bates apartments at 15th and F streets NE, striking six men. Residents said they were unnerved by the violence, as officials decried those involved and promised to do more.

“Shootings, gunshots, people dead,” said 69-year-old Tyrone Washington, who has lived in the area all his life. “It’s crazy.”

D.C. Council member Charles Allen (D-Ward 6), who chairs the public safety committee and until recently represented the Kingman Park area, said officials are adopting a “whole of government” approach to confronting crime, instead of relying totally on police.

But, the lawmaker said, “I don’t think you’ll find anybody who feels things are moving fast enough. ... Every aspect of government should feel a sense of urgency around this.”

D.C. Police Chief Robert J. Contee III told reporters at the scene of the shooting that the city has invested in ways to “stem the tide of violence,” but some people “have just lost their sense of humanity.”

[Homicides in D.C.](#) now stand at 127, up 11 percent over this time last year, according to the city’s official count on Tuesday. But assaults with dangerous weapons, which include shootings, are down 8 percent, even with the unusually high number this past week.

Police have released few details of Monday’s mass shooting and have made no arrests. They identified the man who died as Lance Melvin, 24. He lived in Southeast Washington, but public records show his family once lived in the area where he died. Efforts to reach relatives were not successful. Police said the others did not have life-threatening injuries.

City officials suggested some blame fell on the Azeze Bates apartment complex, with Contee, Allen and an advisory neighborhood commissioner accusing the complex owners of failing to take proper security measures.

Contee said, “I’m told there is some type of private security, or firm, that is responsible for this property. I have not seen it yet.”

Allen said he met with residents and apartment representatives three weeks ago after shots were fired there to get them to install more security cameras and add private guards. Allen said the owners are “not doing their job in keeping their own residents safe, as well as their neighbors.”

Dustin Sternbeck, a D.C. police spokesman, said two apartment security cameras trained on the area where Monday’s shooting occurred did not work, leaving investigators without video that might help identify those involved. He said detectives are going door to door in hopes of finding residents with cameras that might help.

Peter Larson, the vice president of property management for Horning Brothers, which owns the apartment complex, said those two cameras have been vandalized twice in the past six months.

“The cost is very expensive and we are taking additional expensive precautions to help prevent further vandalism,” Larson said in an email, noting new cameras should be up and running by early next week.

Larson said company officials “are deeply saddened and distressed” by the shooting on Monday, adding that “safety and well-being of our residents is our prime focus, and we are working hard to address the security challenges.”

The property manager said the company has two armed guards in addition to off-duty police officers, who he said drive around different complexes. On Monday night, he said one off-duty D.C. officer had just finished patrolling a location in Ivy City, about two miles away, and another had just been at Azeze Bates. He said two security guards were in another part of the complex when the shooting occurred.

Larson said he has asked police and lawmakers to put a city camera tower in a public alley where the six people were struck Monday. A police spokesman referred to comments Contee made at the shooting scene. “We are not private security for private property,” the chief said.

On Tuesday, a bullet hole was visible on a wall in an alley next to a church near the apartments.

A mother walking to a carryout for lunch who heard Monday’s gunshots said she kept her children inside Tuesday, and away from the playground in the area. She said they had been out playing a day earlier when the shooting took place.

“When we came outside to check on our kids, we saw the people outside on the ground shot,” the woman said, speaking on the condition of anonymity out of concern for her safety. “Everybody was calling for help.”

The woman said she has lived at Azeeze Bates for the past few years, and now wants to move, not just out of her apartment, but out of Northeast Washington. “Our kids can’t play, we can’t go to the store,” she said. “We fear every time we walk. They have just been randomly shooting in broad daylight, nighttime.”

Washington, who has lived in the area all his life, joked that despite the violence, he plans to stay “69 more” years.

At Lincoln Park in Northeast, a few blocks away, city law enforcement agencies handed out ice cream and cotton candy while chatting with community members Tuesday evening for National Night Out.

Rachel Cerlen, 37, fed her 1-year-old daughter a snow cone and handed a bag of popcorn to her son, 4, while they cooled off in the shade.

“We’re a community that continues to figure out solutions for a lot of these problems beyond just the typical narrative,” she said. “Crime is up here, crime is up everywhere. We all have to keep grappling with that as a country. Our community is doing the best from the top, from the bottom, from the sides to come together and try to figure out the best ways to reduce the crime and support all members of our community.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Police miss red flags in domestic abuse</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/02/police-miss-red-flags-domestic-abuse-victims-deadly-price">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/02/police-miss-red-flags-domestic-abuse-victims-deadly-price</a>
GIST	<p>Red flags captured the attention of lawmakers in Washington, but they can only help save lives if police, prosecutors and judges know how to act on them</p> <p>One day after <a href="#">Mariah Carpenter</a> was gunned down by her ex-boyfriend, her mother met local police at a storage unit in Columbus, Ohio, belonging to the killer. They rolled up the door and made a shocking discovery: there, among dozens of pairs of new Air Jordan sneakers, were at least 20 guns, including assault rifles.</p> <p>A convicted felon, Quantaine Tate was barred from having any of them under federal and state law.</p> <p>It wasn’t just the volume of guns Tate owned that was stunning. So was the number of warning signs that should have alerted authorities to be especially vigilant about protecting Carpenter from the father of her two-year-old son. Tate had physically abused Carpenter late in her pregnancy, threatened her with a gun and grabbed her by the throat – all key indicators that an abuse victim is at grave risk of eventually being killed.</p>



Jacquelyn Campbell, a professor at Johns Hopkins University whose pioneering work includes dozens of studies examining why abusive relationships turn deadly, said Carpenter's case makes her cringe. "So many red flags," she said.

Recognizing red flags is essential for police, prosecutors and courts to make informed decisions as they try to protect domestic violence victims and their families – for example, by requiring abusers to [relinquish](#) any firearms they possess or by helping victims connect to shelters and other lifesaving support services. Thanks to researchers like Campbell, there is a large and growing body of knowledge about which victims are most at risk of being killed, as well as assessment tools that can help victims and law enforcement understand the magnitude of the danger before it's too late.

Now red flags have captured the attention of lawmakers in Washington. A new [bipartisan law](#), signed by Joe Biden last month, contains a provision encouraging states to enact so-called red flag laws that allow police to temporarily remove guns from people at extreme risk of harming themselves or others, including intimate partners. The legislation, aimed at preventing mass shootings like the recent ones in Uvalde, Texas, and Buffalo, New York, is the most significant gun safety bill to pass Congress in nearly 30 years.

But red flags can help save lives only if police, prosecutors and judges know how to identify them – and if they act on that knowledge. In scores of domestic violence gun homicides from 2017 through 2020, Reveal from The Center for Investigative Reporting found that the opposite often happened: law enforcement repeatedly ignored even the most glaring signs that a victim was at high risk of being killed.

According to more than three dozen interviews with domestic violence and criminal justice experts around the US, most law enforcement agencies provide little or no training in how to recognize red flags or how to use them to protect victims and their families. Many police departments also don't use lethality assessments, widely seen as the best way to steer high-risk victims into support services.

Instead, police often become frustrated by the dynamics between a victim and her abuser, domestic violence experts said, dismissing warning signs as part of a dysfunctional pattern that can't be changed. Even when agencies do make the effort to put assessment tools in place, police, prosecutors and courts often don't follow through – for example, they frequently don't seize abusers' guns even when those firearms are illegal.

The failure to heed red flags is one of the factors contributing to [soaring rates](#) of domestic violence gun homicides in the US – up 58% since 2010, to the highest level in nearly three decades, according to FBI data analyzed exclusively for Reveal.

The repercussions often ripple far beyond the abusive relationship. According to a 2014 [study](#), 20% of people killed in domestic violence homicides are not the intimate partners themselves but family members, friends, neighbors, police and bystanders. [More than two-thirds](#) of mass shootings in the US from 2014 through 2019 were domestic violence incidents or were perpetrated by people with a history of domestic abuse.

Carpenter is a case study in what can happen when law enforcement agencies don't act. She dated Tate for less than a year, unable to tolerate his possessive, controlling ways. But after their breakup, he would not leave her or the baby they were expecting, alone. In 2016, when the pregnant Carpenter refused to move in with him, Tate choked her, pulled a gun from his waistband and threatened to kill her. The following year, Tate again tried to strangle Carpenter, throwing her on to a bed and leaving her scratched and bruised.

Women who have been non-fatally choked by their partner are [seven times](#) more likely to eventually be killed than other abuse victims; women who are abused while pregnant are three times more likely to be slain, Campbell's research has shown. Just owning a firearm makes an abuser five times [more likely](#) to take his partner's life; if he actually uses a weapon to threaten or assault her, her risk of being

killed is [20 times higher](#) than for other abuse victims. The combination of risks makes a situation like Carpenter's "all the more dangerous", Campbell said.

Yet the criminal justice system's handling of Tate did not reflect that extreme danger. Following a standoff with a Swat team in the first attack, Tate was charged with kidnapping and felony assault on a police officer, but after spending more than four months in jail awaiting trial, he ended up pleading guilty to a lesser charge of attempted assault on a police officer and serving one month of probation. In the second incident, he was convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence and spent 49 days in jail, with another two years' probation. Tate's convictions meant he was legally barred from having firearms, but Columbus authorities didn't have protocols in place to confiscate any guns, and there's no evidence in court files that the judges presiding over his cases ordered him to do so – an issue that surfaced again and again in the cases reviewed.

In June 2018, a little over a year after he was released from jail in the second attack, Tate shot 24-year-old Carpenter in the head before turning the gun on himself. "She passed away right at the baby's feet," Carpenter's mother, Dawn Sutherland, said of the couple's toddler son. When police kicked in the door of Carpenter's apartment, they found A'Mill bouncing in his exersaucer, his socks drenched in his mother's blood, Sutherland said.

### **Decades of research dismissed or ignored**

Research into why some women survive their abusive situations while others succumb dates back to the 1980s. Since then, public health and domestic violence experts have studied hundreds of intimate partner killings in multiple states and around the world, comparing those deaths with cases in which victims lived. Most of the research focuses on male abusers and female victims.

Campbell and her colleagues ultimately [identified at least 20 factors](#) that put victims at increased risk of being killed. One of the most dangerous periods, they discovered, is when a woman decides to end the relationship; in one [study](#), a victim's chances of being killed by her abuser tripled after a separation and increased ninefold if he was highly controlling. Intimate partner violence is fundamentally about power and when a victim walks away, the power dynamic shifts. "Leaving means the abuser believes their control is over," said Micaela Deming, policy director for the DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Violence is also more likely to turn lethal if an abuser exhibits stalking behavior toward his intimate partner or if he has forced her to have sex, researchers found. The threat is compounded if an abuser is unemployed or has a history of drug use, alcoholism or suicide threats. One often-overlooked risk factor is the presence of children unrelated to the abuser. A woman is [twice as likely](#) to be killed if her abusive partner is not the biological father of her children.

As part of Reveal's [project](#) on intimate partner gun homicides, we've examined hundreds of [cases](#) around the US in which firearms were used to [kill](#) domestic abuse victims, their relatives and bystanders, including police. In many of these cases, obvious, overt red flags were repeatedly [overlooked](#) or dismissed.

Melissa Shoop's mother lived in fear of what her daughter's ex-boyfriend might do to their family. John Paul Belew had a long criminal history and struggled with addiction, and he rarely held a job. In a relationship that spanned 11 years and the birth of two daughters, he stalked [Shoop](#), harassed and assaulted her, broke into her Ohio home and threatened her relatives on multiple occasions, according to police reports. Shoop did her best to break free, reporting his abusive behavior to police, seeking refuge with friends and obtaining protection orders from local courts. But Belew wouldn't let her go. "She was his meal ticket," Melanie Shoop said. "She was his everything."

Melanie Shoop tried to advocate on her daughter's behalf. "Every time he would come up on charges for anything, I would personally send a letter to the judge and ask him to give him maximum jail time to keep my daughter and granddaughters safe," she said. She directed one such plea to the Toledo municipal court judge overseeing two 2019 cases, one in which Belew stole Melissa Shoop's car and

another in which he overdosed while their younger daughter was in the back seat. “I would say, ‘Please review his history. Please know that he is dangerous and please give him the maximum jail time that you can,’” she said. But instead of a jail sentence, Judge Timothy Kuhlman ordered Belew to continue in a drug treatment program while he was on a year’s probation.

Kuhlman said he thought helping Belew address his addiction and mental health problems would do more to protect the public in the long term than briefly locking him behind bars. “Unless you can put someone in jail for the rest of their life, you cannot guarantee victim safety,” Kuhlman said, noting that the cases before him did not include a domestic violence charge. “What we cannot do is predict where and when a person might get to the point where they kill their partner and lock them up before that.”

The incidents made Melissa Shoop, 31, even more determined to move on, her mother said; Belew responded by escalating his harassment and threats. “He always thought he could reel her back in, but this last time I think he became a desperate man,” Melanie Shoop said. “I think he really thought she was getting away from him.” One night, less than a month after Kuhlman’s ruling, Belew emerged from the shadows near Melissa Shoop’s home in the town of Maumee, outside Toledo, as she sat on the front porch with friends. He fired several shots, killing her, then himself.

In the case of 42-year-old [Shanae Clayton](#), a hospital medical assistant in Pontiac, Michigan, the red flags were so obvious that even a child could recognize them. Zariah Clayton, now 24, was a first-grader when she said she witnessed her mother’s boyfriend trying to choke her. “Roger’s going to kill you,” she warned her mom.

But Clayton’s relationship with Roderick “Roger” Washington continued on and off for 18 years. Despite his lengthy criminal history, including convictions for felony drug possession, attempted home invasion and misdemeanor domestic violence, he always seemed to have a revolver. In 2018, Clayton awoke to find her tires slashed and a note accusing her of sleeping with someone else. But when she called police, “they were very dismissive”, Zariah Clayton recalled. “They said the letter was so detailed, a woman must have written it ... They made my mom second-guess herself like she was crazy.” Another time, Zariah Clayton was the one Washington threatened – an incident she [recorded](#) on her phone. When she called police, “they asked me, does he have any weapons? I told them yes.” But instead of arresting Washington and looking for the gun, police gave him a ride to his father’s house and never followed up, she said.

Capt Andre Ewing of the Oakland county sheriff’s office said in an email that there was no record of Zariah Clayton calling his agency to report Washington threatened her. Nor was there “any evidence that Washington committed any crime, or he would have been arrested” following the 2018 incident, Ewing said.

Then, like many domestic violence victims across the US, Shanae Clayton found herself trapped with her abuser during the pandemic, even as he lost his factory job and his drinking and violence escalated. When she contracted a near-fatal case of Covid-19, she saw her recovery as God giving her another chance. “I have to get my life together,” her daughter recalls her saying. “Roger has to go.”

Instead, Clayton became part of a grim pandemic trend: a spike in domestic violence homicides. According to unpublished FBI data analyzed for Reveal by Northeastern University criminologist James Alan Fox, gun homicides by intimate partners soared 25% in 2020 compared with the previous year.

Women accounted for more than two-thirds of those killed. During a fight on 24 April 2020, Washington pulled out a gun, punched Shanae in the face, then shot her twice. Washington pleaded no contest to second-degree murder and was [sentenced](#) to 22 to 50 years in prison.

#### **Not using this lifesaving tool is ‘malfeasance’**

Domestic violence cases are among the most complex and dangerous crimes that police handle. They make up the [largest category](#) of calls to police and lead to a [handful of law enforcement deaths](#) every

year. Yet police academies devote an average of just [2% of their training time](#) for new recruits on domestic abuse.

Likewise, prosecutors and judges get little training, compounding cultural biases that may lead authorities to blame victims. Some judges are actively resistant to training, said Amber Lueken Barwick, who conducts trainings for the North Carolina Conference of District Attorneys, believing that identifying high-risk situations “isn’t their role – this is somebody else’s job”.

“We need to help [judges] understand the role they play and how that could save someone’s life, especially when it comes to pre-trial conditions,” she said. “If it means that someone needs to stay in jail while a victim gets safe, that needs to be considered. There needs to be a heightened level of monitoring the defendant.”

There are also proven tools that could aid authorities: lethality assessment tools that help measure the level of risk. The most widely used tool is an [11-question checklist](#) based on Campbell’s research that police officers are supposed to administer after any domestic disturbance call and takes just five minutes to complete.

Introduced in 2005 by the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, the assessment’s main purpose is to help victims understand the extent of the risks they face and seek help – for example, by taking refuge at a domestic abuse shelter, reaching out to a mental health counselor, joining a support group or putting together a longer-term safety plan. But it can also help law enforcers recognize the danger signs even if they have not received in-depth training.

According to Campbell’s research, many domestic violence homicide victims never realized the gravity of their situation. People killed by their abusers also tended to have limited contact with advocates; in one [report](#), only 4% of intimate partner homicide victims nationwide had ever reached out to domestic violence programs for help. Yet that report shows that high-danger victims are 60% less likely to be assaulted again if they go to a shelter. After police departments across Maryland began using the assessment tool based on Campbell’s work, intimate partner homicides dropped by one-third over a five-year period, according to the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence.

Not only should more law enforcement agencies be using the lethality tests, said Mark Wynn, who conducts domestic violence workshops for the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the US state department and the justice department, but they also should be coordinating with other local agencies to use the tools more effectively. “When it’s a community early warning system, you’re more likely to see behaviors of the offender earlier,” he said. Not using lethality assessments to save lives, he added, is “malfeasance”.

But even when police departments do try to put such tools in place, there’s no guarantee they will be used correctly – or at all. That’s what happened in Columbus, where Quantaine Tate killed Mariah Carpenter and himself in 2018.

Sgt Rick Ketcham, head of the Columbus division of police’s domestic violence unit, recalls learning about the Maryland lethality assessment at a conference in Boston in 2013: “I thought it was beneficial – this was the direction we need to go.” But the tool took two years to implement, and the department’s 900 patrol officers didn’t use it consistently. In 2016, for example, after Tate choked Carpenter and threatened her with a gun, there’s no evidence that Columbus police gave her an assessment. “They may not have thought about it,” Ketcham said.

The next time Tate strangled her in 2017, Carpenter went straight to prosecutors, Ketcham said.

Once again, no lethality assessment was done.

## Who's at Risk for Domestic Violence Homicide?

These 11 questions can help police determine whether an abuse victim is in lethal danger.

**HIGH DANGER: If the answer to *any* of these first three questions is yes, this situation is considered highly dangerous.**

- ☐ Have they ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a weapon?
- ☐ Have they ever tried to choke or strangle you?
- ☐ Do you think they might try to kill you?

**If the answer to *four or more* of these next eight questions is yes, this situation is considered highly dangerous.**

- ☐ Do they have a gun or can they easily get one?
- ☐ Have they threatened to kill you or your children?
- ☐ Are they violently or constantly jealous or do they control most of your daily activities?
- ☐ Have you left them or separated after living together or being married?
- ☐ Are they unemployed?
- ☐ Have they ever tried to kill themselves?
- ☐ Do you have a child that they know is not theirs?
- ☐ Do they follow or spy on you or leave threatening messages?

Source: Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence

HEADLINE	08/02 Saga of Hawaii 'spy' couple in KGB garb
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.thedailybeast.com/saga-of-hawaii-spy-couple-pictured-in-kgb-garb-gets-even-weirder-in-court?ref=home?ref=home">https://www.thedailybeast.com/saga-of-hawaii-spy-couple-pictured-in-kgb-garb-gets-even-weirder-in-court?ref=home?ref=home</a>
GIST	<p>A Hawaii woman prosecutors say lived under an assumed identity for decades—and may have ties to Russian intelligence—doubled down on the alleged charade during a detention hearing with her husband on Tuesday.</p> <p>Asked by U.S. Magistrate Judge Rom Trader to state her name, Gwynn Darle Morrison replied, “They are calling me Gwynn Darle Morrison.”</p> <p>In 1987, Morrison, 67, and husband Walter Glenn Primrose, also 67, used the birth certificates of two dead Texas infants to begin a years-long masquerade as “Bobby Edward Fort” and “Julie Lyn Montague,” <a href="#">according to a criminal complaint first reported last week by The Daily Beast</a>. In 1988, the feds say the couple—who had already wed as Walter Primrose and Gwynn Morrison—remarried each other “under their respective assumed identities,” the feds say.</p> <p>Megan Kau, Morrison’s lawyer, told Trader, “My client maintains that her name is Julie Lyn Montague, and [says] that’s the only thing that she’s ever gone by.”</p> <p>Later in the hearing, Trader asked Primrose to also state his name— but got a very different response.</p>



“Walter Glenn Primrose,” he said.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas Muehleck told Trader he was flummoxed by Morrison’s behavior.

“Your honor, it’s a little strange here that the defendant maintains... she is Julie Lyn Montague,” Muehleck said. “You know, her sister was interviewed by the FBI and was shown a picture of the Julie Lyn Montague Hawaii driver’s license with the defendant’s photograph on there, and said, ‘That appears to be Gwynn, but the date of birth is wrong.’”

Morrison and Primrose, who are detained in a federal lockup, appeared separately by phone, due to COVID protocols. Both entered not guilty pleas.

In 1994, Primrose joined the Coast Guard as Bobby Fort, who would have been 27 at the time. Primrose was actually 39 years-old—eight years over the cutoff age for new recruits.

Primrose was eventually granted a secret-level security clearance, and retired from the Coast Guard as an avionics technician in 2016 after a 20-year hitch. He then went on to work as a cleared defense contractor at Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point near Honolulu. His clearance was still active when he and Morrison were arrested on July 22, according to court filings.

Morrison once lived in Romania during the Soviet era, according to prosecutors, who have not yet been able to explain what she was allegedly doing there. When federal agents searched the pair’s home in Oahu, they discovered documents written in code, maps of military bases, and an invisible ink kit, the feds say. And when the couple were briefly left alone, but didn’t know their conversation was being recorded, they allegedly referenced “things consistent with espionage.”

“Federal agents have... seized photographs from the defendants’ residence that depict the defendants apparently some years ago wearing what have been identified as KGB uniforms,” [prosecutors said in a detention memo filed July 25](#). And in a court appearance last week, prosecutors said investigators had learned from associates of Primrose and Morrison that the two “had a longstanding interest in espionage and expressed anti-government and anti-military sentiments.”

The two left their home in Texas in the 1980s “suddenly,” and told family they were entering the witness protection program, according to assistant U.S. Attorney Wayne Myers.

On Tuesday, Morrison’s lawyer, Megan Kau, called the government’s evidence “vague,” and disputed that the pictures were in any way incriminating.

Kau said the “alleged photograph” of Morrison “wearing an alleged KGB uniform,” had been taken “some time ago... in somebody else’s home.” Primrose was also seen in KGB garb, which Kau claimed was the same outfit that Morrison was wearing.

“They’re wearing T-shirts,” Kau told Trader. “My client, at least, looks like she’s wearing a T-shirt underneath [the] jacket.”

Kau asked for Morrison’s release, arguing that prosecutors have not provided enough material via the discovery process for her to adequately debrief her client about her past, including any aliases she may have used.

But Muehleck pushed back, arguing to keep Morrison and Primrose detained.

“We have a situation here where this defendant and her co-defendant, of course, have used false identities to deceive Social Security, the Department of Defense, the Hawaii Department of Transportation, [and] the State Department’s National Passport Center, for 30 years,” he said. “And there’s no verification of who she says she is.”



	<p>Muehleck emphasized the mystery of the KGB uniform photos, noted that Morrison has “traveled foreign,” and joined Primrose on unreported trips to Canada while he was in the Coast Guard.</p> <p>“This is a situation where it is a classic case to detain for flight risk,” he argued.</p> <p>To this, Trader said, “At this point, I can’t even really say that I have confidence as to who Ms. Morrison, or Montague, really, truly is. It really begs the question as to whether or not she can be trusted to comply with any terms and conditions that the court sets.”</p> <p>He ordered Morrison and Primrose both detained pending trial. Jury selection is set to begin Sept. 26.</p> <p>The two are charged with conspiracy to commit an offense against the United States; making false statements on a passport application; and aggravated identity theft.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 FBI sent public info requests to Uvalde</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/fbi-request-info-school-shooter-created-difficult-position/story?id=87561710">https://abcnews.go.com/US/fbi-request-info-school-shooter-created-difficult-position/story?id=87561710</a>
GIST	<p>In the days immediately following the massacre at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, city leaders were bombarded with requests for information from journalists covering the attack. More than a hundred submissions were sent to city hall and the police department under the state's public information law, to request documents and video that could help make sense of a mass shooting that left 19 children and two teachers dead.</p> <p>But it wasn't just members of the media who were seeking such records; the FBI was too, according to government emails newly obtained by ABC News.</p> <p>In the wake of one of the deadliest school shootings in America's history, the nation's premier investigative agency used, among other means, the Texas Public Information Act to seek relevant information -- the same method used by news reporters and TV producers.</p> <p>The FBI would not comment on the record as to why it used a process geared toward public information requests as part of its official investigation. But state officials have noted that the aftermath of the shooting has been plagued by a lack of communication on the part of numerous agencies -- <a href="#">much to the frustration</a> of victims' family members who still have unanswered questions about the attack.</p> <p>Emails show the that the FBI ended up getting the information it was seeking -- but not through the Public Information Act request.</p> <p>The requests were made on May 26 and May 27 by personnel from the FBI's field office in San Antonio, Texas, who submitted three separate public records requests with the city of Uvalde seeking, among other things, police reports associated with the shooter and any reports associated with the home where he was living with his grandmother, who he shot in the face before heading to Robb Elementary.</p> <p>A law firm representing the city of Uvalde told the FBI that its requests should be directed to the Uvalde Police Department, rather than the city itself, and that public records requests from the FBI put the city in a "difficult legal position."</p> <p>"The state rules do not allow for an intergovernmental transfer of records with a federal agency," a representative from the law firm Denton Navarro Rocha Bernal &amp; Zech wrote to the FBI in an email.</p> <p>"Additionally, the rules require that the requests from your agency be treated in the same manner as all other requestors," the email said. "Unfortunately, compliance with the rules is counterproductive and does not make any sense in this situation. However, we cannot advise our client to 'not follow the rules.'"</p> <p>The law firm suggested that the Uvalde Police Department could provide the FBI with the records it requested without having to rely on the Texas Public Information Act.</p>

"The provision of records would be under separate law that allows for cooperation with other agencies for law enforcement purposes," the law firm said.

On June 16, the FBI emailed the law firm, saying, "We no longer need these records," and withdrew its requests.

A spokesperson for the city of Uvalde told ABC News that "initially, the FBI's request was treated like open records because of the sheer volume the city received," which the spokesperson said included 244 open records requests related to the shooting.

"But the city inevitably cooperated with the FBI and made sure they had what they needed," said the spokesperson.

The information was provided by the Uvalde Police Department, the spokesperson confirmed.

"The city has processed all open records requests in accordance with the laws that guide us," said the spokesperson.

The emails obtained by ABC News, which themselves were obtained through a public records request, also included requests from the Texas Department of Public Safety, the state's top law-enforcement agency, that were made directly to Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton's office for information related to the shooting and the suspect.

Similar to a request made by the City of Uvalde to the AG's office, the Texas DPS initially asked that this information be withheld from the public. In an email to Paxton, DPS officials argued that the records needed to be kept confidential because the public "knowing the location where surveillance assets and Department employees focus during operations, knowing how many law enforcement personnel are participating and their response capabilities, will compromise law enforcement purposes by enabling criminals to anticipate weakness in law enforcement procedures."

Meanwhile, DPS officials confirmed to ABC News that they received requests from the FBI relating to the case and shared evidence with them through intergovernmental transfers.

DPS officials also said recently that they had, themselves, shared some information with the public that had been requested though the Public Information Act.

"DPS has released some emails and text messages in response to specific public information requests," a DPS spokesperson said, adding that the agency "is waiting for rulings" from the AG's office on several requests.

"The first ruling should be issued sometime in the middle of August," the spokesperson said. "The Texas Ranger investigation remains active and ongoing. We are also waiting for further instruction from the Uvalde County DA with regard to the release of additional information."

The mystery and confusion surrounding the shooting cropped up almost immediately after the attack, as several law enforcement and elected officials shared misleading or contradictory information in the hours and days following the massacre.

"The fear of a coverup is palpable here, and while most see it as simply part of an intragovernmental 'blame game,' others have made wild accusations that authorities are sweeping some major scandal under the rug," a Texas House of Representatives committee wrote in an extensive report on the shooting released two weeks ago.

"It does become harder to proclaim the truth when it is so opaque. Most fundamentally, there has been a loss of trust in government," the report said.

	In response to many media outlets' requests for records and other information, the city of Uvalde has claimed that "any release of records" would "impede a thorough and complete investigation." Several media outlets, including ABC News, are planning to mount a joint challenge to government agencies' limited response to requests.
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